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VOL. VII

NO. 10

THE
CAMBRIDGE
JOURNAL

UNIVERSITY
OF MICHIGAN

AUG 25 1954

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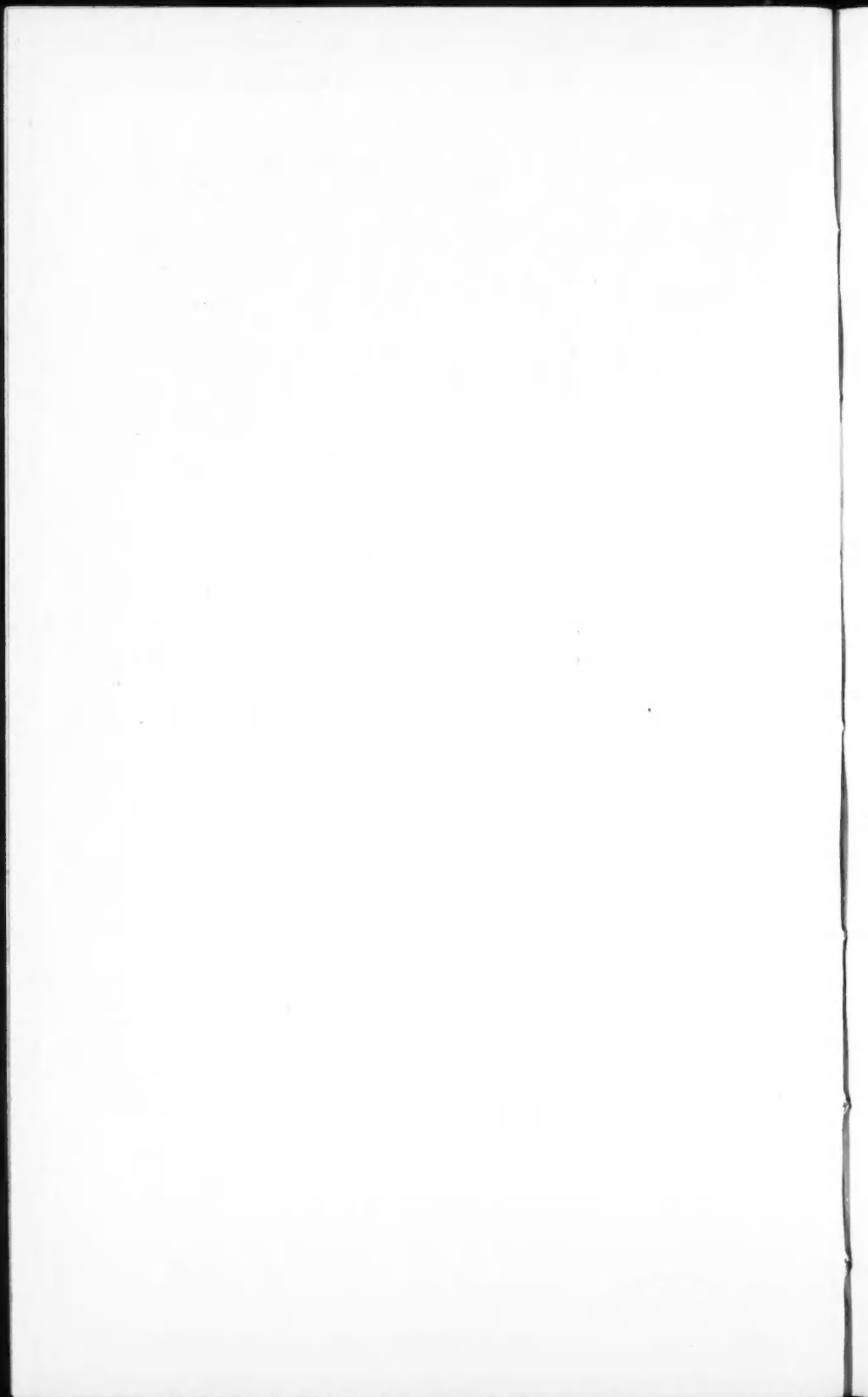
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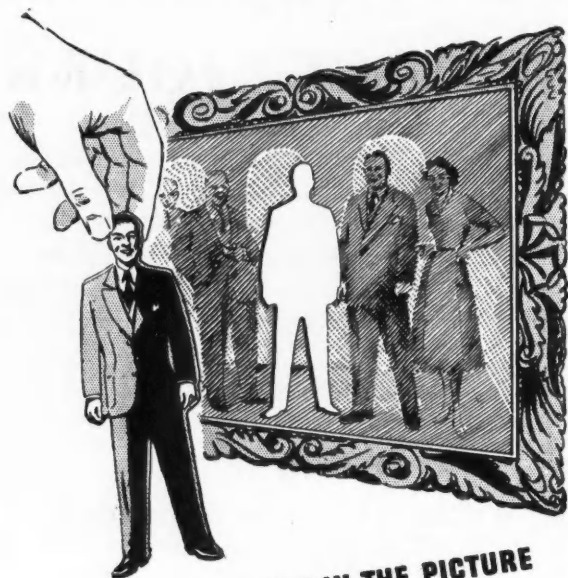
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SIR LEWIS NAMIER AND CONTEMPORARY EUROPEAN HISTORY

D. C. WATT

THE period of European history between 1919-39 is one much neglected in Britain. There is no learned journal which specializes in this field. There are no precise parallels in this country to the various distinguished European institutes of research, such as the *Rijksinstituut voor Orlogsdokumentatie*, or the *Münchener Institut für Zeitgeschichte*. And as most of the important work in the field is done outside the British Isles it follows, that our major libraries are far from adequately supplied with the relevant literature, and the way of the isolated student who is interested in the field is a difficult one. It is precisely this absence of a general corpus of study, or the facilities for it which render the three works¹ of Sir Lewis Namier in this field of such great importance.

The field of this period of European history is peculiar in three particulars. It can be easily defined, and therefore easily studied in isolation. Its atmosphere is sufficiently alien to that of the present day to make the transition to its values and ways of thought a conscious one. And it possesses one major advantage from the viewpoint of historical study in the immense wealth of material available. This material can be divided into four groups, according to the dates at which it became available for historical research. The first group covers the various 'coloured books' published by the belligerents as propaganda measures, including those published by the Germans from the captured French, Polish and Czech archives. A second group comprises the memoirs published before or immediately after the end of the war,² the war-time Ciano Diaries, and the main collection of documents used at Nuremberg.³ These two groups formed the basis for Namier's first and finest work in the field, *Diplomatic Prelude*. A third group covers the main group of post-war document publications for propaganda purposes, the State

¹ *Diplomatic Prelude* (1948); *Europe in Decay* (1950); *In the Nazi Era* (1952).

² e.g. Sir Neville Henderson, *Failure of a Mission* (1942) (British Ambassador in Berlin, 1937-39); Léon Noël, *L'Aggression Allemande Contre La Pologne* (1946) (French Ambassador in Warsaw, 1935-39); Lukaszewicz in *Dziennik Polski* at various dates in 1946-47 (Polish Ambassador in Paris, 1936-39); G. Gafencu, *Les préliminaires de la Guerre. Derniers Jours d'un Europe* (Rumanian Foreign Minister, 1938-40).

³ *Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression* (1948). International Military Tribunal. *Trial of the Major War Criminals* (Nuremberg, 1949). Cited below as *Nuremberg Documents*.

Department's volume of captured German Foreign Ministry documents on Nazi-Soviet relations,¹ and the Russian counter-publications from Czech, Polish and German sources on the British and French policies of appeasement.² To this should be added two groups of memoirs, the first those of the leading French statesmen of the pre-war and Vichy period, Bonnet, Flandin, Paul Boncour, Gamelin, Reymond and Baudouin, and the second those of the German 'resistance', Gisevius, von Schlabrendoff,³ and the von Hassell Diaries. With the first volume of Churchill's War Memoirs and the first fruits of Professor Toscano's work in the Italian State archives,⁴ these works were all reviewed and studied in Namier's second work in the field, *Europe in Decay*. The fourth group opened in 1948 with the first volumes of the major publications of the British and German diplomatic documents,⁵ the latter under tripartite allied management. On these and the memoirs of the German military and bureaucratic supports of Nazism, Weizsäcker, Kordt, Dirksen, General Halder, etc., Namier based his third work in the field, *In the Nazi Era*. In the preface to this last work he announced his intention of deserting the field for some considerable time in view of his responsibilities under the projected history of the English Parliament.

Any serious consideration of Sir Lewis Namier's work in this field must be prefaced by two extremely important qualifications. In the first place much of this work is of a slight nature. His finest work in this field, *Diplomatic Prelude*, the only one to have a consistent theme through 400 of its 460 pages, was completed in 1946 before the main bulk of material in the field became available. His other two books are composed of reprints, mostly from *The Times Literary Supplement*, of short studies or reviews of individual volumes of documents and memoirs. It is true that Sir Lewis has provided each of the two books with a preliminary essay putting together part of the essays reprinted, a section on the French 'memoirs born of defeat' in the first of the two and one on 'men who served Hitler' in the second: but the effort of unification is very much *ex post facto*.

In the second place, in considering these scholarly exercises in journalism as a contribution to serious historical study we are in fact

¹ *Nazi-Soviet Relations, 1939-41*. Edited R. Sonntag and J. S. Beddie (1948).

² *Documents and Materials Relating to the Eve of the Second World War*, 2 vols. (Moscow, 1948).

³ *Bis zum Bitteren Ende* (Zurich, 1946). (Trans. *To the Bitter End* (1948).) *Offiziere gegen Hitler* (Zurich, 1946). (Trans. *Revolt against Hitler* (1948).)

⁴ Various essays, particularly *Le Origini del Patto d'Acciaio* (Florence, 1948).

⁵ *Documents on British Foreign Policy, 1919-39*. Third Series, edited by Sir Llewellyn Woodward and Rohan Butler. (London, H.M.S.O.) *Documents on German Foreign Policy*, Series D. (London, H.M.S.O.)

applying a different set of criteria to them to those which their author can have had in mind when writing them. To their readers, reviews of books are intended to suggest criteria by which the books reviewed should be judged. Any review, other than the merely adulatory, is to some extent a commentary on, or a corrective to, the mood the book reviewed is designed to engender in its reader. In their original place, in newsprint, these reviews are extremely effective, excellent if polemical examples of their kind. But Sir Lewis has himself chosen to give them a more permanent status, and they must therefore be judged by sterner and more lasting standards. These essays seem to have been partly conceived as propaganda: that is as work, not necessarily unbiased on truth or fact, whose aim is not so much the establishment of that truth but the combating or advocacy of a point of view. The danger, in historical terms, is that the facts may be coloured to support or destroy that point of view. Those that benefit the desired course may be excessively emphasized, those that tend to cast doubt on it passed over in silence or conceded in terms that rob them of their value. Sir Lewis is indeed candid as to his anxieties that before well-founded judgments based on the mass of material available 'percolate through to the wider public, tenets and slogans based on insufficient or deliberately twisted evidence may strike root, as happened with German propaganda after the first world war'.¹

Action to counter this possibility is, however, open to similar objections. If Sir Lewis intends to counter it by the substitution for these 'less desirable tenets or slogans', of others which seem to him more desirable, he is merely substituting new myths for old: for until the evidence has been worked over, any judgments made must necessarily be ill-founded, since they will be based on insufficient evidence. If he intends to counter the danger and accelerate the process of percolation by the presentation of excerpts from the mass of evidence available, he is equally open to suspicion. For until the evidence has in fact been worked over, the selection or appreciation of dribblets from the main mass is certain to be governed by preconceptions in the mind of the reader if not in the mind of the selector. Either of these courses might be defended on the grounds that public opinion prefers mythology to truth. It is easier to believe that one was betrayed; by the stupidity of the foreigner, if one chooses to believe the Flandin apologia for French inactivity during the Rhineland crisis, or the Kordt-Halder story of the conspiracy thwarted by Munich; or by the blindness of one's leaders, if one chooses to accept Churchill's version of the history of the 'thirties, as Sir Lewis obviously does. To accept such beliefs avoids too the necessity of admitting the guilt, the responsibility of all for

¹ *In the Nazi Era*, p. 3.

the events of the last twenty-five years. But this is not the kind of defence that should be advanced by a historian, nor the kind of belief that he should encourage.

Sir Lewis is far too good a historian to fall into this particular trap. But his general pessimism as to the effects of reason on argument,¹ his historical method, concerned as it is so closely with responsibilities, and his political position, as a self-styled Tory Radical, all combine to bring him very near to its verge.

In his method, Sir Lewis has been compared by one of his more embittered subjects² of attack to a detective. But his method has closer analogies with that of the prosecuting counsel. He is primarily concerned to establish the proper order of facts. But, these once established, his next interest is responsibilities for action, and still more for inaction. Perhaps a better analogy would be with a French judge. For Sir Lewis is ruthless with his witnesses. The normal deceptions and omissions or commissions of untrained memory, he greets with sarcasm, bitterness and intolerance. His witnesses are rebuked for their lack of historical method, though they are not historians, insulted for their inattention to detail, convicted of deliberate falsification where they contradict themselves. Errors in dating or the inaccurate citing of documents are not accepted as the normal thing in those whose general sense of their own historical importance has subdued their command of detail. They are regarded as the intended lies of a guilty person, or, at the least, as contempt of court. Moreover he does not concern himself so much with establishing an understanding of the rôle played by his witnesses as with criticizing them for not having played another. As exercises in the removal of false plumage, his essays are immensely entertaining, and of great historical value. But he continues, usurping the rôle of the judge or the head master, to award marks for good or bad conduct. And the reader is left to wonder what value to set on his judgment in other matters. Consider for example, his verdict on M. Reynaud: 'He hardly seems to have been equal to a crisis of the first magnitude.'³ This is the voice of the end of term report. It holds no illumination of Reynaud's motives or dilemmas. Or consider his verdict on M. Baudouin: 'there was a credit side which whatever his mistakes, deserves attention.'⁴

In politics, and in his view of the history of the 'thirties, Professor Namier's position is nearest that of the right-wing Tories of Churchill's persuasion and historical tastes. In an earlier work,⁵

¹ *Diplomatic Prelude*, pp. 3-4.

² M. Bonnet in a letter to *The Times Literary Supplement*, January 30th, 1953.

³ *Europe in Decay*, p. 52.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 102.

⁵ *Conflicts* (1942), p. 94. The essay, from which this is taken was originally written in 1918.

he described himself as 'Pro-Russian and anti-German, a conservative by instincts, predilections and doubts, in short a Tory Radical'. But in spite of this attempt to identify himself with that Fourth Party which has haunted British politics since Lord Randolph Churchill's parliamentary début, Sir Lewis is, in matters of contemporary European history, true to his Eastern European forebears. He has none of the true Tory Radicals' imperialism and none of their constant feeling for the weight of extra-European factors. The increasing bellicosity of Japan, the effects and anxieties of the 1931 slump, the deplorably weak naval position of Britain in the 'thirties escape him. The true Tory dreams of Anglo-Saxon Leagues of Peace, has hopes of America, anxieties in the Near East. As a Zionist, Namier has his own rather different hopes, ideals and anxieties. But they do not fall within the scope of this essay.

At first sight this criticism might appear unjust. With one exception, all the individual works he examines deal exclusively with the European scene and leave no opening for the play of extra-European forces. But its justice emerges from the one exception, his study of Professor Toscano's account of the German-Italian military alliance of May 22nd, 1939, the so-called 'Pact of Steel'. This took its origin in a Japanese initiative in 1938 proposing the transformation of the anti-Comintern pact into a military alliance. At Munich the idea was taken up strongly by Ribbentrop in discussion with Mussolini and Ciano as a means of neutralizing Britain and the U.S.A. before the next coup was put into effect. In his visit to Rome on October 30th, 1938, he broached the matter again. Mussolini remained unenthusiastic. Namier explains Mussolini's lack of enthusiasm as grounded on his dislike of an alliance with Japan which 'would have hindered rather than helped Mussolini at this juncture in his pursuit of Mediterranean objectives'.¹ This is a misconstruction of Mussolini's motives; he had no objection as such to a Japanese alliance. The Italian ambassador in Tokyo had been recommending an Italian-Japanese alliance, complementary to an Italo-German alliance a month previously,² and tentative conversations already in progress were to lead two months later to the transmission via the Italian naval attaché in Tokyo of a Japanese draft text of such an alliance.³ The idea of two complementary alliances rather than one simple triple pact was favoured by Mussolini,⁴ as his objections to an alliance at this time were to an alliance with Germany rather than to one with Japan. Such an alliance would have lost him the advantage of being courted both by Germany and Britain. Its probable unpopularity in Italy was a consideration which reinforced the other objections rather than counted

¹ *Europe in Decay*, p. 134.

² Toscano, p. 19, fn. 19.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 44, fn. 38.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 35.

for much in itself. He was hostile also to the idea of an alliance which merely made Italy third party in a scheme concocted between Ribbentrop and Oshima, the Japanese ambassador in Berlin.

With this one distinction, that Sir Lewis writes as a European Tory, where Churchill and his followers are Tories of the Empire, they share the same thesis: that the war which broke out in 1939 was an 'unnecessary war'. That is, they attempt to explain what did happen in terms of what should and still more should not have happened — surely a questionable practice in the writing of history. There is always the danger that the pronouncing of moral judgments may take first place, while the essential process of comprehending the motives of those judged be neglected if not omitted. It is all too easy to pass from regarding those responsible for what should not have happened as mistaken and misguided men to regarding them as fools, or knaves, or criminally stupid. Consider for example Sir Lewis's two studies of the Anglo-Russian negotiations of 1939,¹ so violently interrupted by the news of the Nazi-Soviet pact. They are written throughout in a tone of bitter contempt for Chamberlain and his group, those 'ex- or semi-Liberals of middle-class non-conformist extraction whose Liberalism had gone rancid — anxious business-men lacking imagination and understanding even in business, and in foreign politics full of good-will *à bon marché*'. Throughout, the fundamental dilemma which faced these men remains unmentioned. Yet the British Cabinet were, after March 1939 in an impossible position. Their hopes of Munich had been shattered by the occupation of Prague. Strategically, the potential enemy, Germany, and the potential ally, Russia, lay separated by a No-Man's-land, a vacuum of power, occupied by a variety of states equally hostile to both Germany and Russia though inclined by interest of class and economics towards Germany, now the dominating force in Central Europe. The issue at stake was the domination and occupation of this vacuum; to England it represented itself either as a further series of capitulations to Germany or its abandonment to Russia. There was unfortunately a third course, to unite the states of the No-Man's-land and to inflate this union to the status of a third power-bloc in Eastern Europe. The choice between these first two courses was so terrible a dilemma that it is hardly surprising that the British cabinet preferred not to face it squarely. For it necessitated the acceptance by the cabinet and the Conservative Party as a whole, of the inevitability of war with Germany, who was even then advancing on Poland. And it implied that British public opinion inflamed by the abandonment of Austria, the Sudetenland and Bohemia to Germany should watch the further

¹ *Diplomatic Prelude*, pp. 143-210; *Europe in Decay*, pp. 238-58.

engulfment of Poland and Rumania; or to avoid this, that it should sanction the employment of the same kind of pressure which had secured the cession of the Sudetenland by Czechoslovakia to persuade Poland and Rumania to allow the entry of Russian troops into their countries. Perhaps, 'Tory realism' might have faced this dilemma and implemented the decisions of Yalta and Potsdam seven years earlier. The Conservative solution was at once subtler and less 'realistic'. It had three heads, firstly the erection of some kind of Eastern European bloc based on Poland and Rumania, with Russian co-operation if possible; secondly the negotiation of some kind of settlement in Poland of the issues of the 'Corridor' and 'Danzig'; thirdly the diversion of German economic interest and the pacification of her resentments by the offer of colonial conversions.¹ What was to be avoided at all costs was the 'policy of lining Europe up into blocs animated by hostile intentions towards one another and both accepting the view that war was inevitable', as Chamberlain said on May 19th, 1939. Namier quotes this speech, not for the explanation it gives of Chamberlain's policy but in order to cite and agree with Churchill's reply, that he could not understand these 'refinements of diplomacy'.

For Namier, as for Churchill, the primary task for a British government, if not from the beginnings of German rearmament, or from the occupation of the Rhineland, at least from the beginnings of the Czech crisis of the summer of 1938, should have been the recognition that war was inevitable and the subordination of every consideration to the building of as strong a position for war as possible. It is a curious reflection that this would probably have entailed an armaments race and a Triple Entente on a par with those of 1906-14, which were held to be one of the essential causes of the Great War of 1914, a strong consideration one suspects in persuading Chamberlain and his followers not to adopt it. But a policy on Tory lines would have meant the abandonment of any hope of influencing the German position, and would have been very difficult to justify to British or foreign opinion; such a policy was alien to the moods and ways of thought of the times. The strength of the German position morally is shown by the degree of sympathy for German aspirations felt in Britain during the 1930s, and the constant stream of the great to Berlin, Berchtesgaden or Nuremberg—Lloyd George, Lansdowne, Halifax, the Duke of Windsor, to name only a few.

It was unfortunate that while the sympathizers with Germany's claims were arguing the injustice of a peace settlement based on the questionable thesis of the war guilt of Germany and the untrust-

¹ This is the most charitable explanation of the Hudson-Wohltat talks of July 1939.

worthiness of the German character once possessed of power, the leaders of the new Germany were doing their best to live up to the thesis. From the vantage point of the Nuremberg trials the Churchillian and Namierian thesis can be justified; seven years of war and the documentary evidence for the prosecution have provided public acceptance for the justice of their thesis. But the theory of preventive war is only acceptable in retrospect, after the outbreak of the disease itself. Churchill's phrase 'the unnecessary war' implies that strength would have been enough, its application would have been unnecessary. But could any display of strength have reconciled Germany permanently to what was regarded as the loss of Silesia, the Corridor and the Sudetenland? The support Hitler, the Austrian *deraciné*, drew from the German governing classes argues against this. And could European peace have been stabilized on the basis of a permanent conspiracy to suppress what the strongest European power regarded as its national interests? Had all Europe been happy and contented except Germany such a conspiracy might have been possible. But a permanent conspiracy is only possible where each member considers his own personal aims and interests subordinate to those of the conspiracy as a whole. If one member only puts his own aims first, he will either break with the conspiracy to join the common enemy, or will attempt to blackmail his co-conspirators into satisfying his interests by threatening such a break. Thus the 'Stresa front' presented a Europe united against German rearmament. But there is the gravest of suspicions that this unity was only purchased at the cost of winking at Mussolini's ambitions in Africa. And it was broken when Britain's fears for her naval security led her to conclude the Anglo-German Naval Agreement.

Churchill's phrase implies further that Hitler would have bowed to the threat of force. Such a belief was very firmly held by the Germanophobes of the 1930s. It is interesting to see when it was overtaken and rendered false by events. In 1933, had the French taken Pilsudski at his offer to attack Germany, twice repeated, once at Hitler's accession to power and once on Germany's withdrawal from the League, Hitler would most certainly have been overthrown. In 1934, Mussolini's demonstration of force at the Brenner prevented the *putsch* of that year from success. French military action in 1936 would have very possibly secured Hitler's overthrow, although there was no very obvious alternative government at that date, nor had those elements come together which were later to form the kernel of the opposition. But the incident which was always taken to illustrate this belief was that of the Czechoslovak crisis of May 21st, 1938. Its history is briefly as follows. During the preparation for the Czech municipal elections in April and May 1938 there were a number of incidents in which Sudeten Germans were involved.

Storm troops were formed by the Sudeten Nazis. Strong rumours of German troop movements towards the Czech frontier were in circulation. On May 19th, these rumours found expression in the Nazi press,¹ and Henlein the Sudeten leader suddenly declared negotiations with the Czechs to be impossible and left for Berlin. On May 20th, being in receipt of intelligence reports that four German motorized divisions were concentrated on the Czech border, the Czech government ordered a partial mobilization. On May 21st, an incident in which two Sudeten Nazi officials were killed, provided what, it was feared, might be the *casus belli*. The British government made representations in Berlin which included the transmission of a special message from Halifax to Ribbentrop. Bonnet made a bellicose speech to the press but characteristically confined direct representations to Germany to an unofficial contact between François-Poncet, the French Ambassador in Berlin and von Weizsäcker, the State Secretary of the German Foreign Ministry.² Hitler was forced into the unfortunate position of being attacked by world opinion for being about to do something which he was not yet ready to undertake although it was next on his list of aggressions. He beat an angry retreat and negotiations were resumed in Prague. The entire incident was hailed by the world press as a major diplomatic defeat for Germany and as proof of the theory that it only needed a demonstration of force to make Hitler climb down. The brave Czechs had called Hitler's bluff, so ran the myth.³ However investigation by the British military attaché and his staff on the morning of May 22nd failed to show any abnormal German troop movements, and no indication was found among the voluminous German military documents captured after the war, of any coup having been planned for May 1938. Namier's comment on the incident is '*the alarm may have been premature*'.⁴ Germans do not go into action without a full directive, and this was only in process of being drafted'.⁵ In fact the alarm was premature and the directive was not drafted nor the order to draft it given until after this crisis, and as a direct

¹ J. W. Wheeler-Bennett, *Munich, Prologue to Tragedy* (1947), p. 55, fn. 1.

² *Documents on German Foreign Policy*, series D, vol. II, no. 187. The story current at the time and echoed later, Wheeler-Bennett, p. 57, that Daladier showed the German Ambassador the French mobilization orders lying on his desk and told him, 'It depends on you whether these are signed' finds no basis in the German diplomatic documents. It would appear to be one of the typically dangerous myths put about by interested parties that bedevil the work of historians in the field of contemporary history.

³ There is an excellent statement in G. E. R. Gedyé, *Fallen Bastions* (1939), chap. xxx.

⁴ Our italics.

⁵ *Europe in Decay*, p. 192. The expression is the more peculiar in that his discussion of the dating of Hitler's directives a few pages earlier makes the prematurity of the alarm the more apparent. *Ibid.*, pp. 181-2.

result of it.¹ What Hitler's previous intentions were exactly one can only guess. It is probable that he had not yet reached a final decision as to how he was going to smash Czechoslovakia. But the time-table makes it only too obvious that rather than weakening Hitler the outcome of the crisis only reinforced his intention to smash Czechoslovakia. Further, by causing the British and French governments to realize the dangers of the situation and their lack of preparation for war, it made them the more determined to avoid a repetition of the incident, by any means available, if needs be the abandonment of Czechoslovakia. Had the demonstration of unity occurred in September 1938, it might have strengthened the German opposition sufficiently to stir them to action² — as it was the gun went off at half cock and could not be reloaded. Hitler was warned to devote more attention to the diplomatic preparation for his next coup. The incident is a typical example of the 'war scare' and has many parallels with that of 1875. What is interesting to our purposes is Sir Lewis's reluctance to abandon the myth, an excellent example of the 'concession of facts in terms that rob them of their value' noted earlier.

Namier's two strongest historical biases are his tenderness for the Poles and correspondingly his acute hatred for the Germans. The first manifests itself not so much on any hesitation to use strong language on Beck, the Polish Foreign Minister,³ but in a lack of recognition of the effect which the policy pursued by Poland would have on those responsible for British and French policy. His tenderness shows itself further in the preference he usually gives to Polish sources, notably the memoirs of Lukasiewicz, quondam Polish ambassador in Paris,⁴ and Sir Lewis's personal friend, in the process of weighing contrary pieces of evidence against one another. Preference for the evidence of those whose freedom from bias seems guaranteed by one's personal knowledge of their character is a dangerous course for the historian and still more for his readers, for there are more types of bias than deliberate intellectual dishonesty.

¹ The order was dated May 30th, and ordered military preparation to be ready by October 1st, 1938. *Nuremberg Documents*, 388-PS, U.S.A. 26.

² J. W. Wheeler-Bennett, *Nemesis of Power* (1953), pp. 404-24 for an excellent and balanced discussion of this incident. Namier discusses it in his usual vein at various places in *In the Nazi Era*, especially in his discussion of the Kordt brothers.

³ Though it is interesting to note the form his remarks take. 'Indeed few could be found to defend Beck's miserable and shortsighted policy... yet', *Ibid.*, p. 183.

⁴ These lie scattered through the pages of various Polish émigré publications. In view of the lack of sources on Polish foreign policy, for this period, their collection and translation would be a work of great historical value and service to those students of this period, surely the vast majority, who have no command of Polish.

The natural judgment of the good historian will act in restraint where there is a conflict of evidence. But where there is no conflict, and the bias of one set of evidence seems confirmed by other evidence equally biased, there is great danger.

An excellent example of this is Namier's misconstruction of the Polish rôle during the reoccupation of the Rhineland. In this he accepts the version put out by Flandin, the French Foreign Minister to justify his own failure to take action, and that of Noël, the French ambassador in Poland, whom Namier seems to regard as anti-Polish.¹ According to these accounts, on the first day of the German march into the Rhineland, Beck offered the French a *casus foederis*. 'When Hitler entered the Rhineland, no one urged an immediate riposte as strongly as Beck.'² According to Noël, whose version is similar to Flandin's, Beck persisted in his unfriendly feelings towards France, his firmness being due to his expectation that France would capitulate, even though he was not too sure of this on the first day of Hitler's action, March 7th. On March 8th, the Polish semi-official news agency *Iskra* put out the German case only. In view of Beck's assurances of the previous day Noël somewhat naturally visited him to protest, as he later protested at attacks on his position by newspapers subservient to Beck. 'In short', concludes Namier, 'the grave crisis became the occasion for petty cavilling' — a somewhat unfair comment. He grants the possibility that Beck began back-peddalling on the offer when he saw that France did not intend to act. But Noël's conduct in protesting at semi-official press attacks on himself or at the possibility of Polish opinion being forced into a war on an issue which its government press agency showed to be a bad one are natural actions for an ambassador and do not deserve this tone of contempt. It is obvious that Beck was playing a double game, an impression that is only too thoroughly confirmed by the contemporary diary of Count Szembek, the State Secretary in the Polish Foreign Ministry³ and the picture given in Beck's own memoirs.⁴

According to Beck's account he told Noël that as the German action could in certain circumstances lead to a German-French conflict he should inform his government that, if the conflict broke out under the conditions of the alliance, Poland would not hesitate to fulfil her duty as an ally. According to the account he gave

¹ Namier's discussion will be found in *Diplomatic Prelude*, pp. 440-2, where he discusses Noël's memoirs; and in *Europe in Decay*, pp. 9-33, where he discusses those of Flandin.

² *Ibid.*, p. 162.

³ Count Jean Szembek, *Journal Politique* (1952).

⁴ Colonel Josef Beck, *Dernier Rapport* (Neuchâtel, 1951). There is an interesting discussion of the discrepancies between these two sources in the *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte*, 1954, Januar, Heft 1, pp. 86-94.

Szemбек he told Noël merely that Poland was ready to enter into full conversations with the French government on the situation created by the German action. He then added for Szembek his opinion that the German action did not constitute a *casus foederis*. And he did not think there would be a war as Britain was neither sufficiently prepared, nor sufficiently armed to risk a conflict with Germany. He was ready to discuss the matter with everybody. But he did not intend to get mixed up in resolutions condemnatory of the German action.

Although Beck does not seem accurately to have repeated the substance of his conversation with Noël to Szembek who disliked the French connection, the more so since the Franco-Soviet pact, it is clear that he did not offer unqualified support for any French action, as claimed by Flandin and Noël. What he would have appeared to have done is to have confirmed the terms of the Polish-French alliance, which would have remained inoperative unless the German troops had overshot the Rhineland and attacked Metropolitan France; which was not the point at issue at all. Szembek's diary makes it plain that there was within Poland both before and after the German action, considerable dispute whether German re-occupation did represent a *casus foederis*. No doubt had France marched into the Rhineland Poland would have seized the chance of strengthening herself *vis-à-vis* her stronger neighbour. But France did not move. And there is no satisfactory evidence that Beck urged her to do so at all. Indeed a Polish Note of May 26th, 1938,¹ to which reference will be made below makes this quite plain.

There are two possible explanations for the French version of this incident. It is possible that either Flandin or Noël or both read more into the Polish offer than it contained. But it is more probable that it suited Flandin's book both at the time and later to pretend that Beck's offer was so much more definite than it in fact was, since it made French inactivity seem the more inexplicable and made it the more essential to postulate military incompetence and British intervention to explain it. The military and the British are, in Flandin's version, unmistakably the villains of the piece. Namier's thesis is that Flandin should have insisted on French military action in view of the strong support he was guaranteed from abroad. Since he ascribes French inaction to Flandin's weakness of character rather than of position he does not inquire whether Flandin's version of the Polish action which is so kind to the Poles fits into the subsequent pattern of German policy; while expressing indignation at Noël for his evidence that Poland was not quite so generous as Flandin would have us believe. The country which urged French action strongest was Czechoslovakia, and M. Krofta made Czech

¹ Cited, *In the Nazi Era*, p. 185.

support for any French move publicly known in an interview with the *Daily Telegraph*. The matter was duly treasured in Hitler's memory and brought up against the Czechs at the right time.¹ But even in the most turbulent days of 1939, Hitler never complained of the Polish position at this time.

Dislike of Germany is not uncommon among historians of Sir Lewis Namier's generation and indeed of that subsequent to him, particularly those with diplomatic interests and backgrounds and those who watched the successive and successful German attacks on the flimsy structure of international organizations during the 'thirties, with what seemed to be the tacit approval of the democratic governments. But few historians carry their dislike of Germany's actions to such a degree of bitterness as does Sir Lewis. His hatred of Germany, and the Germans comes, as his earlier essays show, not from indignation aroused by the deeds and moves of Nazi Germany but rather from much earlier contact with the chauvinism of the bourgeois nationalists of Wilhelmian and Weimar Germany. And his bitterness makes him so unfair in his comments, and is so vividly expressed that a great deal of the effect aimed at is spoilt. It is as well that Britain should not react from the war-time extremes of hatred of Germany to the other extreme of idyllic pan-Saxonism which blinded her eyes in the 1920s and early 1930s to German rearmament, since both are equally dangerous. But such a swing is only aided by any attempt to make the mental attitudes of the war-time years permanent in peace. And it betrays Sir Lewis into manifest unfairness to individuals, as for example in his treatment of Weizsäcker's memoirs.²

On May 30th, 1938, after the humiliation of the Czech crisis outlined above Hitler stated to his generals his unalterable determination to smash Czechoslovakia as soon as possible and issued orders for plans to be ready by October 1st.³ This Weizsäcker must have known, as he knew of Hitler's instructions to the Sudeten Germans always to demand more than the Czechs could concede. Wilder plans were afoot among Hitler's entourage, sponsored by Goering among others, to stage a sudden coup. These Weizsäcker opposed. He was against war in 1938, and the attempt to convict him of participation in such plans in a War Crimes trial at Nuremberg duly failed. For his inmost reasons there is no evidence. Those that he set on paper or expressed to others were naturally of such a character as to influence those to whom they were addressed. It was obviously useless to express objection to aggressive war as such to Ribbentrop, even if Weizsäcker held any such sentiments. His preference was

¹ *Documents on German Policy*, series D, vol. IV, no. 228.

² *In the Nazi Era*, pp. 63-83.

³ See *Nuremberg Documents*, no. 388-PS (U.S.A. 26).

given to a policy aiming at the 'chemical dissolution' (*ein chemischer Zersetzungs-prozess*) of Czechoslovakia without risking a war with the entente. In pursuance of this policy he appears, from captured German documents¹ to have used extremely strong language to von Ribbentrop whenever that wicked man dwelt on the Goering scheme for a quick *coup à la Sadowa*. In his memoirs Weizsäcker naturally claims credit for this difference with his chief, and his courage in opposing him. In an earlier discussion of an instance when Weizsäcker, at a much later date, in 1941, used similarly strong language to Ribbentrop, Namier gave credit to Weizsäcker for 'a sincere and courageous expression of his views'.² But in his review of Weizsäcker's memoirs, perhaps under the influence of a perusal of the full record of Weizsäcker's trial,³ Namier seems to have come to a reassessment of Weizsäcker's character which seems less than just. He cites two instances from the published German documents on German relations with Czechoslovakia of memoranda Weizsäcker wrote after conversations with Ribbentrop in which, according to his own uncorroborated record Weizsäcker told Ribbentrop that it was Germany's business not to fool herself.⁴ He comments then 'these two minutes are for his own eye and use only. There are photographs of both in our Foreign Office Library. They are unsigned and bear no mark of having been communicated to or read by anyone'.⁵ Namier's thesis, it emerges, is that Weizsäcker invented these conversations, or at least the language he attributes to himself, as a kind of insurance against the future. This is a very damning thesis to erect on such slender evidence as the absence of other initials on a document; and the facts, of which Sir Lewis must have been aware, admit of other explanations. Both the photostats and the originals of the documents mentioned remain, under the terms of publication of the German Foreign Ministry documents,

¹ These were produced in Weizsäcker's defence at his trial, and cited by him in his memoirs.

² The occasion was a Weizsäcker memorandum of May 1941 printed in *Nazi-Soviet Relations*. Reviewed in *Europe in Decay*, pp. 259-80.

³ These are not yet available to the public. Selections from the transcripts and the documentary evidence submitted have, however, recently been published in *Trials of War Criminals*, vols. XII-XIV, case XI. U.S. v. von Weizsäcker (Nuremberg, 1949).

⁴ *Akten zur Deutschen Auswärtigen Politik*, series D, vol. II. nos. 304 and 331 (Baden-Baden, 1950). This has been cited here in preference to the English translation, *Documents on German Foreign Policy*, series D, vol. II which is not so well equipped with technical apparatus as the German which should be taken as the basic edition for scholarly purposes. The documents themselves bear the same numbers in both editions.

⁵ According to Wheeler-Bennet who discusses the same point in *Nemesis of Power* and who as Historical Advisor to the British Editor-in-Chief of *Documents on German Foreign Policy* had access to the originals, they were kept in a sealed envelope in the files.

closed to public research until the whole of the series to which they are relevant has been completed. Also the publication of these early volumes of series D of the German Foreign Ministry documents was undertaken, as the editors acknowledge,¹ before the full range of the files had been examined, and the *apparatus criticus* employed is not such as to enable positive pronouncement on points of the order raised by Sir Lewis. Nevertheless enough evidence has been provided to cast grave doubts as to the correctness of his thesis. From the film serials cited by the Editors these documents were taken from two series of files, both of the State Secretary, one his usual file on Czechoslovakia, the other a special file.² The second of the two memoranda was found in a sealed envelope within the Special file, was classified by his own bureau as *Geheime Reichssache* (the highest German security classification) and was kept in a safe (*in Kasette*).³ This classification does not come surely from the nature of Weizsäcker's comments but from the subject discussed, that of a *coup de force* upon Czechoslovakia and the possibility of a war with France and Britain as a result. This is hardly the kind of material Weizsäcker was likely to entrust to the normal registry channels of the Foreign Ministry. Moreover the analysis of surviving Foreign Ministry archives of this period⁴ show that very few of Ribbentrop's own files both those he held in his capacity as Minister and those of his personal staff fell into Allied hands. No Reich minister files on Czechoslovakia were used by the Editors of the publication as they would surely have been, had they survived, only the film made at some period by the Foreign Ministry itself of the most important documents.

Further these are not the only two memoranda extant of conversations even at this date in which Weizsäcker expressed similarly strong views to Ribbentrop. On July 12th for example he argued that such military plans would result in Germany being put in a position when she would either have to go to war or should climb down and insisted that this viewpoint should be out to Hitler.⁵ On July 31st he told Ribbentrop that the position did not allow a *coup de force*.⁶ There is abundant evidence that Ribbentrop was completely foreign to the practices of the German Foreign Ministry, and the presence or absence of his signature or stamp on a document

¹ Ibid., series D, vol. II, General Introduction, p. ix.

² Staatssekretär Czechoslovakia, Sonderheft. A printer's error in the English edition of vol. II ascribes this to the Under-State Secretary's Office.

³ *Akten zur deutschen auswärtigen Politik*, op. cit., vol. II, p. 419 fn. 2.

⁴ *Documents on German Foreign Policy*, series D, vol. I, appendix I. This deserves to be read and pondered by historians before theses such as that attacked above are advanced or considered.

⁵ Ibid., no. 288.

⁶ Ibid., no. 329.

cannot be taken as evidence for a point of this order, especially as the subject was far too secret at this period to pass through the normal channels of his secretariat. In brief what are printed are Weizsäcker's copies of memoranda, of the highest grade of secrecy, they being the only copies which apparently survived. These particular copies are not initialled by Ribbentrop, and in view of their secrecy did not pass through the normal registry. Their secret character was given them not necessarily by the nature of the views expressed in them by Weizsäcker but by the character of the subject under discussion.

Namier continues to cite a note made by Weizsäcker a year later in September 1939 that after the first five or six months he gave up trying to attain his aim, the preservation of peace by the direct means of giving his views to Ribbentrop and, being better acquainted with his mentality, tried other means. Weizsäcker was appointed State Secretary in April 1938, and these notes should thus be read with the memoranda he drafted in July 1938. Namier considers it in isolation and comments: 'Thus the cautious Weizsäcker put down a highly compromising statement which could serve no purpose but that of an alibi, in changed circumstances: another form of caution.' A singularly stupid one in a police state surely. That Weizsäcker was in many ways cautious to the point of cowardice is known. Under the stress of war and in fear of the Gestapo he broke contact with the real opposition in Germany in 1942, until his transfer to the German Embassy to the Vatican gave him safety and renewed his courage, provoking Hassell to bitter comment.¹ Namier, however, is accusing him of cowardice towards Ribbentrop on a disagreement on policy. On the available evidence the verdict must be at least 'non-proven'. Weizsäcker's memoirs are often unreliable and very much the case for the defence, and his behaviour at Nuremberg was obviously inspired by a wish to disassociate himself from his already executed chief, rather than by respect for the truth. But this does not excuse an attack of this order advanced with such vigour from so slender a basis.

A similar example where Namier's bitterness towards his victim hampered the full elucidation of the truth occurred in his recent bout with M. Bonnet in the pages of *The Times Literary Supplement*. The subject is again the Czech crisis of May 1938 and Bonnet's account of the Franco-Polish aspect of this crisis. As shown above, France did not follow the British example in making a *démarche* in Berlin on May 21st, 1938, although Bonnet did attempt to get the Poles to do so. In his memoirs,² Bonnet misdated the Polish refusal

¹ The von Hassell *Diaries*, entries of April 29th, 1942, and December 27th, 1943.

² G. Bonnet, *Defense de la Paix, De Washington a Quai d'Orsay* (Geneva, 1946).

to meet his wishes and gave his version of the Polish Note of refusal. From the grandiose claims made in the introduction to his book, 'an account free from errors or gaps' it might be inferred that this was the full text. In a letter published in *The Times Literary Supplement* on March 21st, 1950, Namier gave a much fuller text of the Note.¹ This letter he reprinted in *In the Nazi Era* as an Appendix. By comparison with this version, Bonnet was shown:—

- (a) to have omitted the opening paragraphs of the Polish Note which stated that the possibility of a large scale conflict created a situation in which Poland would have to reserve to herself the possibility of a new decision on her action.
- (b) to have much condensed and sharpened the main points of the Note;
- (c) to have omitted completely the last paragraph as follows:
'In addition, I (i.e. Col. Beck) would reaffirm as I did on March 7th, 1936, that we are ready to fulfil our treaty obligations within the limits of the present agreements and that we are prepared to enter into friendly discussions of any new factors based on a mutual apprehension of the interests of the two countries.'

Namier's tone implied that this omission was deliberate, if indeed it was an omission. The form of Bonnet's version of the Note suggests that he is guilty not of suppressing part of a document but of misrepresenting his own notes made of the contents of the Polish Note at the time it was delivered, as though they were the authentic and original text.

Having cast the vials of his scorn upon Bonnet for his historical incapacities Namier then claims the last paragraph to be a Polish offer to moderate its position on the Czechoslovak issue in return for a *quid pro quo* to be discussed. He cites statements by Lukasiewicz to the effect that he thought that the French government could feel encouraged to continue discussions on Czechoslovakia with Poland. No such discussions, so Namier concludes, took place: 'The Polish offer was first torpedoed by Bonnet the statesman, and then obliterated by Bonnet the historian.'

A reference to this sentence in *The Times Literary Supplement*

¹ This is a particularly good example of Namier's practice of acting as his own witness. His letter cites two sources, firstly Lukasiewicz's report of his interview with Bonnet printed in *Documents and Materials relating to the Eve of the World War*, vol. I, op. cit., no. 11, and secondly an article by Lukasiewicz in *Sprawy Międzynarodowe*, vol. II, nos. 2-3. Neither of these contains the text of the Polish note as reproduced by Namier, and he gives no other indication as to how he obtained it; presumably from Lukasiewicz.

review of *In the Nazi Era* provoked Bonnet to belated protests. In a letter in the *T.L.S.* on January 30th, 1953, he conceded Namier's version of the note, but stigmatized the vital last paragraph as 'consisting of a few friendly but non-committal phrases' (which view is a sufficient explanation for its omission from his version, if, as argued, in his version he represented his own notes as the authentic text). He then cited evidence from Lukasiewicz's report (as given by the Russians) of the interview at which the Note was delivered to show that he, Bonnet, had in fact asked for more frequent discussions with Lukasiewicz, to discuss 'any aspect of the current situation'. According to documents which Bonnet claimed to have obtained from the French National Archives, he had instructed Noel on June 3rd to see Smigly-Rydz on the subject of Polish aid for Czechoslovakia and had had further discussions in July with Lukasiewicz on the same subject. He claimed that with these documents he had published all the documents extant in the French archives on the subject. He also very stupidly accused Namier of trying to suppress Lukasiewicz's report.

Namier's first counterblast,¹ pointed out Bonnet's acceptance of both Namier's contentions as to the dating of the Note and its text. He then used this admission to cast doubt on Bonnet's new documents and refuted Bonnet's accusation that he had suppressed the Lukasiewicz report.² On the main point, whether Bonnet had ignored the Polish 'offer' he was weaker. While granting that Beck was determined to get his pound of flesh, he denounced Bonnet for not having asked Beck's price. That is surely to imply that instead of bringing pressure on Prague to cede the Sudeten provinces to Germany, such pressure should have been used to make Prague cede Teschen to Poland (an action of equal moral indefensibility, if justifiable on strategic grounds), should a Polish-Czech front against Germany have been achievable with this cession. He also cited statements made by Lukasiewicz in 1948 that being disappointed by Beck's vague generalities, he had on various occasions attempted though without result to get him to be more precise. This evidence is directly contrary, though not contradictory, to the evidence of Bonnet's 'documents' but being based on memory is intrinsically less valuable. It is also possible that Warsaw did not inform him of Bonnet's moves. Namier as usual prefers Lukasiewicz's memory to Bonnet's documents.

In a second letter,³ Bonnet repeated his statement that he had published all the papers in the French National Archives on the

¹ *Times Literary Supplement*, February 13th, 1953.

² It is, however, characteristic that he did not quote any of the report, even those passages which might show Bonnet's actions in a favourable light.

³ *Ibid.*, July 17th, 1953.

incident and then rashly cited three more.¹ On the main point, the Polish refusal to state a price for support of Czechoslovakia, his position remained very strong. He also showed that Teschen was offered to the Poles in September 1938, by which time it was too late to have any effect. Namier's final reply,² included passages from Lukasiwicz's same post-war article, the tenor of which was to show that, as argued above, Bonnet had entirely missed the point of the last paragraph and had withheld his notes of the conversation with Lukasiwicz from his permanent officials, Legér and Massigli, for several days. Not until the notes reached them was the significance of the last paragraph realized. Lukasiwicz then expected the point to be followed up, which, according to him, it was not. This broadside Bonnet left unanswered.

The incident affords an excellent example of Namier's approach to his victims. As in his comments on Weizsäcker's memoirs, he seems to combine in his person the functions of detective, prosecuting counsel, judge and jury, the entire process from the discovery of the criminal's fingerprint to the donning of the black cap. Further, in his eagerness to convict Bonnet of deliberate falsification, he has missed what would appear to be Bonnet's real faults, his misrepresentation of his own notes as the full text of the Polish Note, and his attempts to masquerade as a historian. That Bonnet has no inkling of the importance of dating, identification of documents, etc., is obvious in every line of his bombastic and pretentious volumes. But surely to accept his own self-valuation and to attack him as a scholar who has perverted his training is to do him too much honour, and to weaken the case against him by excess of vehemence.³ In the *mêlée*, the three most interesting points, Bonnet's method of work with his permanent officials, his failure to comprehend the veiled offer contained in the last paragraph of the Polish Note and, even when it was revealed to him, the overwhelming importance of speedy action: and thirdly his continuous efforts to find support for a policy, which he was not prepared to carry *à l'outrance*, these remain uncommented upon. Bonnet obviously preferred a mock alliance to overawe Hitler rather than a real one

¹ Bonnet's method of publication tends throughout to cast doubt not only on the width of selection of the documents he publishes but also their value. In this letter he cites a summary of two minutes one of May 21st and one of May 26th, 1938, without any indication as to the nature of the document, its origin or who drafted it.

² *Ibid.*, July 24th, 1953.

³ This incident affords an excellent example of Namier's skill. Whatever the source of the version of the Polish Note he published, it could not have come from other than private sources. It would have been more prudent of Bonnet to have denied the authenticity of Namier's version and to have questioned its source.

to overthrow him. This no doubt is his real crime in Sir Lewis's eyes.

To work in detail through these three books under discussion leaves one astounded at the care with which Sir Lewis fulfils the scholar's first and most important duty, the establishment of the time order and character of events. His care for accurate dating and timing, his thorough comparison of sources, the width of his reading and information compel admiration. But the second duty of a scholar is surely the elucidation and interpretation of the motives which lie behind the order of events. To this Namier seems blind. In the otherwise admirable 'Introduction and Outline' with which he prefaces *Diplomatic Prelude*, his discussion of German motives is limited to 'passionate forces', 'obsessionist, sadistic hatreds' and 'a crude ideology': the motives of the appeasers are 'uneasy, fleeting and contradictory'. 'There was embarrassment, desire for peace, purposeful credulity, an attempt to recover their bearings and to reassert their self respect . . . and above all exasperation with anyone who would try to probe that mass of emotional pretence and questionable reasoning.' This is name-calling, abuse of a very high order, but it neither asks nor answers any of the questions that should be asked. What motives inspired the appeasers? What values bulked so large in their minds as to obscure their interpretation of German designs? What made the German people so eager to follow Hitler's lead and so slow to see where he was to lead them? The riddle of motives, values and comprehensions remained unanswered.

In its place Namier seems concerned to establish responsibilities, and those not causal so much as moral in nature. In his essay on 'Memoirs Born of Defeat',¹ he has an excellent summary of the factors which tended to confuse French policy in the years before 1939 — but his interest in them is their use to explain the failure of the French leaders to reach their decisions on policy, rather than as the background for such decisions as were made. It is written to enable a more informed judgment on moral responsibilities, to lead up to the final verdict: 'There is a great deal to be said in defence of the French statesmen and generals of the inter-war years but on a plane different from that on which they argue their case.' His aim seems to be the establishment of a universally valid moral judgment, to be universally accepted.

Moreover to discuss the events of the inter-war years in terms of the strength and weakness of characters is surely unsatisfactory. The strong or the weak in history are only as strong as their position will allow them. The weakness of Churchill's position in the 1930s was very largely the result of his own strength of character. The

¹ *Europe in Decay*, pp. 1-8.

resolution with which he had opposed the India Act had estranged him from the Conservative leadership. And the very vehemence of his warnings against German rearmament made his appointment to office impossible until the policy of attempting to reach agreement with Germany had been finally abandoned. From many points of view, Hitler was a very weak character. On the evidence of his 1923 Putsch, Malaparte called him 'the woman'.¹ His early failures, his submersion in the Lumpenproletariat, his caution in 1932 which nearly lost him his chance of power, his loss of nerve during the Rhineland crisis;² his continuous encouragement of intrigue so that he had two or more foreign departments, two propaganda authorities, two war commands, two parallel economic organizations, two sets of armed forces: his inability to tolerate any but second or third rate characters in his entourage; these all argue extreme weakness of character. But being decided in his aims, unshakeable in his decisions and ruthless in their execution, we must count him a 'strong character' confirmed in the strength of his position by the despair of his adopted nation and the conscience and preoccupation of his potential opponents. Namier's villains equally reveal themselves so often to have been in unavoidably weak positions. If in one sense they were the creators of the dilemmas in which they found themselves, they were much more their victims.

This sense of responsibilities so often blinds Namier to the dilemmas with which his victims were confronted. Consider the German nationalists. They were men reared in a strong sense of duty, drawn from the professional classes who weigh devotion to the standards of their professions and the service of their countries above all else. They were patriots who had lived through defeat, revolution and inflation in the continuous knowledge of foreign hatreds, military defencelessness and political isolation. And they were confronted with the worst dilemma which can face the professional man, that which arises from the identification of the nation he loves with a government whose aims he applauds but whose methods he detests. It is significant that even those who paid with their lives for their earlier complaisance, preferred dismissal by the Nazis to resignation. While in power they could, to however small an extent, influence the formation of policy or moderate its execution. Once evicted they were powerless. It is understandable that

¹ *Technique d'un Coup d'Etat*, ch. viii. The most ironic comment is that of the editor of Lord D'Abernon's *Diary* who in 1929 said Hitler 'was arrested and subsequently tried for high treason, receiving a sentence of five years in a fortress. He was finally released after five months and bound over for the rest of his sentence, thereafter fading into oblivion', cited in Wheeler-Bennet, *Nemesis of Power*, p. 117 fn. 1.

² Kordt, *Nicht aus den Akten*, p. 134, and Hossbach, *Zwischen Wehrmacht und Hitler*, p. 98, both witness to this.

so many preferred to adjust their principles to the limits of practicality, to compromise on one issue in the hope of influencing the next. It was after all what they had accustomed themselves to during the troubled years before Hitler. Only each adjustment was greater and each attempt to exert influence more hopeless than that which had preceded it. Their temptation was crueller and stronger for the long period of preparation which preceded it. Most terrible is that so few resisted it. Yet Namier does not recognize its strength for he is unable to view their prejudices or motives with detachment or understanding.

These three books of Namier's are best viewed as charts to guide the student between the rocks and shoals of contemporary history, the beacons which have been extinguished and the buoys which have been moved. They are an excellent corrective to the memoirs and a good guide to the volumes of documents on which they comment. Without them many Munichsois and collaborators might be well on the road to rehabilitation. We must be thankful to Sir Lewis for his insistence on the truth, against the perversions and erasions which these men would impose on it. But we must regret that his respect for evidence makes him consider the writing of recent history as a legal process; that his interest in the establishment of moral responsibilities and the passing of moral judgments makes him blind to the need to establish motives and understanding. The history of the 'thirties is more suited to the pattern of a tragedy than a trial.

CONSTITUTIONAL MONARCHY: A COMMENT ON A BELGIAN PRACTICE

S. K. PANTER-BRICK

1

It is commonly assumed that it belongs to the notion of a constitutional monarchy that the monarch avoids taking sides in public controversy. Being a living symbol of national solidarity, he must not identify or associate himself with any controversial public issue; and however great an influence he may in fact exercise in private audience with his ministers, it is they who must bear the responsibility or take the credit, if any, for what is said and done. And, so far as the British monarchy is concerned, this assumption is generally true: it represents both our practice and our expectations.

But unless the monarch were to become a mere figure-head, obliged on all occasions to accept the advice of his ministers, and obliged further neither to speak nor to act unless specific advice had been given, there may arise occasions when a monarch can hardly avoid being drawn into political controversy. And since few constitutional lawyers would understand the British monarch as a mere figure-head, such occasions may arise even in Great Britain. For example, if it is acknowledged that the monarch possesses a reserve power of dismissing his ministers or of forcing a dissolution of Parliament so that the electorate may be consulted, then in moments of acute controversy he may be subjected to strong public pressure in favour of the exercise of these reserve powers, which, *ex hypothesi*, he could not exercise without allying himself with one or other of the current opinions. And on such occasions, he will find it difficult to avoid public criticism. Should he choose to intervene, he may be accused, by the ministers whose advice he has disregarded and by their supporters, of acting unconstitutionally. And should he resolve not to make use of his reserve powers, he may be accused by others of expressing a personal sympathy for the advice he has been given. It was a dilemma of this sort that George V tried, with great skill and considerable success, to avoid in 1913 when the Irish Home Rule Bill was before Parliament.

Fortunately for the British monarchy, such occasions are rare. The parties are not often divided on an issue or in a fashion that threatens to provoke violent resistance and allows no compromise. But the circumstances in which it would be expedient to use these reserve powers cannot be specified in advance; and in spite of the embarrassment that this interpretation of his office may on

occasion cause the monarch, the recognition of these reserve powers is regarded as a safeguard against remote contingencies which might otherwise prove insurmountable.

Similar considerations arise concerning the occasions when a constitutional monarch may speak in public and what he may say on such occasions. All that a monarch utters in public is news, however trite it may be. He is in a position to inspire great enthusiasm and loyalty in any cause to which he gives his public support. Thus, though many a cause will receive royal patronage, should it be one that is at all controversial, the monarch will immediately be drawn into the controversy. The speech from the Throne made at the opening of a new session of Parliament is admittedly a statement of party policy, but the occasion is well recognized to be a mixture of politics and ceremonial; it is commonly understood that on such occasions the monarch is a mouthpiece for his ministers and that he is in no way personally committed. Should, however, the monarch speak on controversial matters when the ceremonial is not so traditionally distinguished from the political, speculation will arise as to his own opinions in the matter and the monarch is likely to become involved in party politics.

It is usual for the British monarch to limit his public statements to sentiments that all his subjects are presumed to share, or if anything controversial is said, the occasion is one that makes the monarch personally irresponsible. The traditional broadcast on Christmas Day is an unique occasion. It is made on advice, but the monarch is understood to be expressing personal sentiments and these sometimes touch upon matters of State. It is to be presumed, however, that anything likely to arouse public controversy will be avoided. The only recent occasion on which a British monarch intervened in an issue of public policy, in a manner, time and place that left no doubt about the monarch's own personal wishes, was the speech made by George V when opening the Ulster Parliament in 1921. General Smuts had suggested that it was an opportune moment for the King to make a personal intervention in the Irish question. Both the King and his ministers readily agreed to this suggestion.¹ It was an exception to the rule that the monarch must guard his own personal opinions a close secret from all except his official advisers and his personal secretary; but it was a well-judged exception, justified by the occasion and the nature of the King's remarks. The strictness with which the rule is expected to be observed and the highly vulnerable position occupied by royalty is illustrated by the storm of public comment that invariably follows any chance remark that can be interpreted, however remotely, as an expression of political opinion.

¹ Harold Nicolson, *King George V*, pp. 249-51.

2

Now, while these are the established practices and delicately balanced conventions of the British monarchy — practices that lean on the side of caution and conservatism — they are not in fact shared by all modern constitutional monarchies. And I propose now to consider the practice that seems to have established itself in Belgium, particularly in respect of the public utterances of the monarch. And the point of this inquiry is not to institute an invidious, and indeed meaningless, comparison, but to observe the details of another practice which exhibits rather different propensities and to illustrate the manner in which such practices establish themselves.

The Belgium monarch has on some notable occasions given his personal support, in public statements, to certain political policies that have been considered very important for the interests of the country. And these public statements have been made with the knowledge and acquiescence of the current Ministry; sometimes at its request. It must be supposed that any responsible minister would hesitate before he encouraged the monarch in a step that might involve him in controversy; but it would seem that, in Belgium, hesitation of this sort may on occasion be overruled in favour of making use of the attention which the monarch's personal pronouncement would command. That is to say, the prestige of a royal statement of policy is looked upon, not as something too dangerous to employ except on a supreme occasion, but as an asset that may be used — of course, judiciously — in the more normal course of government.

The most recent, and the most striking, occasion on which the King of the Belgians gave his public support to a particular policy was in 1936 when Belgium made a fundamental change in her foreign policy. It is also an occasion which illustrates the hazards involved. In 1936 Belgium chose a policy of independent defence in preference to the doubtful security that the League of Nations offered. The new policy had already been outlined, or rather foreshadowed, in two speeches made by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, M. Spaak.¹ But for many, it was undoubtedly the King who first drew their attention to the change in policy. Leopold III, anxious and disturbed by the international situation and also by the Government's dilatory methods in preparing the country's defences, took the unusual step of calling and presiding over a meeting of his ministers. The King gave a short analysis of the changes that had taken place in the international situation; he indicated the change in defence policy required to meet the new situation, and of the military measures to

¹ Speech made April 29th before the House of Representatives, and speech made July 20th to the Foreign Press Club.

be taken in consequence.¹ It was a remarkable example of a constitutional monarch's right to advise, to encourage and to warn. The Ministers were undeniably impressed by the *exposé* that the King had made. The veteran Socialist, M. Vandervelde, suggested that it be published — a suggestion that is thought to have been not unconnected with the belief that his party's objections to the proposed increases in defence expenditure and length of service would thereby be more easily overcome. The King and the other ministers agreed and it was immediately published, in its original form, that is, an address by the King to his ministers. Notwithstanding several protestations that it was the policy of the Government and that it was acceptable to the great bulk of the nation, it was immediately labelled 'the King's policy'. Few held, however, that the King had in any way acted improperly: indeed many applauded his initiative, and some were undoubtedly won over to the new policy who would not otherwise have given it their support. Yet when later, after the events of 1940, the nation became divided, the danger of associating the monarch with a particular policy was tragically demonstrated. The fact that the change in policy had become known as the King's policy was accepted by some as contributory 'evidence' that the King had sought to impose his personal rule.

There are, however, other more felicitous instances in Belgian history of the Crown being used to rally opinion in support of some policy or other. Such matters are understandably almost invariably in the field of foreign affairs and national defence. It is in these matters that national unanimity is most desirable, and that the monarch has an especial interest. The King of the Belgians is not only Head of the State but is also the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces. It has been traditional for the monarch to exercise an active command in time of war, and also to maintain a constant and close collaboration with the Minister of War, the minister in charge of defence matters. Royal pronouncements have, however, not always been confined to the field of foreign affairs and defence policy.

The example that has already been given, that of the change in foreign policy in 1936, is an instance of the Government itself taking the initiative. The King was asked to give his public support to an approved policy. There have been other occasions when the initiative was taken by the King, who wished to support some policy that was, in his opinion, in the interests of the country as a whole. Such occasions have sometimes taken the form of a speech, the text of which has been submitted for approval beforehand, or of a letter addressed to his ministers or to an individual minister, to be published at the latter's discretion.

¹ *Recueil des Documents*, 1936-49. Annexe 1. Document No. 4.

Leopold II, for example, repeatedly gave public support to his Government on defence matters.¹ For a long time, faith in the guarantee by the Great Powers of Belgian neutrality made the Belgian public reluctant to sanction defence expenditure. Leopold, convinced that it was important for Belgium to have also the means of self-defence, eagerly supported any measures his ministers were willing to take in order to improve the country's defences. Sometimes his remarks amounted merely to a general exhortation not to neglect the country's defences; on other occasions the King spoke in favour of specific policies. On one memorable occasion, during the celebrations of the 75th anniversary of the founding of modern Belgium, the King took advantage of the presence of many members of Parliament to urge their approval of the proposed defence works, at that time awaiting parliamentary sanction. The King not only engaged influential leaders in animated conversation while others made their speeches, thus both intriguing and scandalizing the huge crowd, but also insisted on introducing into his own speech an enthusiastic reference to the Bill before Parliament. The Prime Minister indeed experienced considerable difficulty in toning down the original text appealing expressly for the Bill to be made law.²

Another outstanding example of the monarch, of his own initiative supporting his ministers is Albert's action in May 1923. He wrote to M. Deveze, supporting him in his request to Parliament that the military service be increased from 10 to 14 months. In a letter clearly inviting publication the King expressed the hope that Parliament would follow the lead given by the Minister of War.³

Albert's prestige was indeed such that he was able, three years later, to take the unprecedented step of commending to the country the Government that had just taken office.⁴ The times were certainly exceptional. The country was faced with a grave financial crisis, and the King with the difficult task of forming a government capable of taking the necessary measures and instilling the necessary confidence. The previous government had taken office only after negotiations among the parties lasting nearly two months, and the parties had once more shown themselves incapable of agreement. There was a need to act quickly, and it was largely due to the King's own efforts and skill that the new government was formed. It was the King who persuaded Franqui, an eminent banker having the confidence of both politicians and financiers, to participate in an all-party government.

¹ At Tournai, on August 24th, 1879. At Ghent, on September 5th, 1881. At Brussels on November 9th, 1886, June 13th, 1887, and July 21st, 1905.

² See, de Lichtervelde, *Leopold II*, p. 320 and Carton de Wiart, *Souvenir Politique*, p. 150.

³ Reprinted in *Revue de l'Administration*, 1924, p. 54.

⁴ In a letter to M. Jaspar, the new Prime Minister, dated May 22nd, 1926, and immediately published.

And when this was finally formed, the King thought it expedient to give it his public support.

It is obvious from these examples that the practice of the Belgian monarch giving public support to governmental policies, thought to merit or to be in need of such support, is both a well-established and a continuous one. It is well recognized that, with care, the monarchy may on certain occasions be utilized to rally opinion or even silence possible opposition. Constitutional practice has, however, gone even further. There have been instances of the monarch advocating, in public, policies that were not those of his Government. In 1897 and again in 1904, Leopold II voiced his support for the abolition of the system whereby those liable for military service could find and pay for substitutes. On neither occasion was the Government prepared to take this step. Similarly, in 1909, in the course of a speech at Antwerp, Leopold recommended the creation of a merchant navy and the establishment of overseas banks, projects that the Government did not recognize as its own.

Such occasions did not go unchallenged, and in the ensuing debates three distinct points of view can be distinguished as to what was constitutional and what was unconstitutional in these matters. The fullest debate took place in 1904, after Leopold had, in a letter to his Minister of War refusing his resignation, once again advocated *service personnel*.

For the Liberal Opposition, M. Hymans held that, in practice, there could be no public divergence of views between the monarch and his ministers.

The personal immunity and irresponsibility of the King is a basic principle laid down in the Constitution. The King's ministers are responsible for all that he publicly does, whatever it may be and whatever form his action may take . . . It was perfectly correct and quite constitutional that the King expressed to his ministers his own personal point of view. That the King should authorize his letter to be published and that his ministers should consider its publication opportune was also quite correct and perfectly constitutional. But scarcely was the King's letter published, than his ministers disavowed it. It is this which is unconstitutional. . . .¹

A different interpretation was that put forward by the eminent leader of the Right, M. Woeste. He protested that,

One goes too far in saying that the King's ministers must accept responsibility for all that the King says or writes . . . The

¹ *Annales parlementaires*. Chambre des Représentants. Séance du 7 décembre, 1904, p. 227.

Government is responsible only for the King's acts: that is, for acts portending or possibly portending some change in public policy . . . Such acts apart, . . . the King has the right to give expression to his own opinions, sentiments and wishes, without the Government accepting responsibility. If this were not the case, the King would be less than the meanest citizen.¹

On this thesis, the King may speak his own mind at his own discretion, but to no legal effect so long as his ministers refuse to take responsibility for what is said or written. It is merely an expression of opinion by 'the first of the Belgians'. On a later occasion M. Woeste admitted, however, that expressions of opinion contrary to the policy of his Government could only result in the Government's resignation.²

The Government of the time itself took a third point of view. At no point in the debate did the constitutional rule as they understood it receive expression in a concise and comprehensive form. But they clearly did not accept the contention that the King could make public his opinions at his own discretion. They took full responsibility for the fact that the King's views were made public. On the other hand, His Majesty's letter, though published by the Government, was not accepted as a statement of Government policy. The King's advocacy of *service personnel* did not imply that it had been decided to make military service a personal obligation; the system of finding substitutes would continue. The King's letter was not, however, a disavowal of Government policy, otherwise the Government would have had no choice but to resign. The letter clearly supported the Government; and in expressing his own opinion on the question of *service personnel*, the King was merely going beyond Government policy, not contradicting it. Thus, according to the Government in power in 1904, the correct constitutional position was that the King formed his own opinions, and, provided they did not contradict the policy of his ministers, the Government could agree to them being expressed publicly. The Government remained, however, entirely responsible for any such expression in public of the King's own private opinions.

The Government adopted a similar attitude with regard to the speech made by Leopold II in 1909. It was stated in the *Journal de Bruxelles*, an official newspaper of the time that,

the King profited from being among a gathering of Antwerp's business community to offer what he considers sound advice . . . His advice need not, however, be followed: it was merely his own ideas that His Majesty was putting forward.

¹ Ibid. Séance du 6 décembre, 1904, p. 211.

² Ibid. Séance du 6 juillet, 1909, p. 1879.

In the course of the Parliamentary debate that followed, the leader of the Government, M. Schollaert, explained that the King's speech did not imply any change in existing policy concerning the Congo. It was simply that 'the King, with his 25 years experience of colonial government, had been given the opportunity of expressing his views on the future of the Congo'. M. Schollaert thought the King's ideas quite sound in themselves and suggested that it was for Parliament and the country to decide what effect, if any, should be given to them.¹

However, none of these three interpretations as to the correct constitutional position received general support. That of M. Woeste did not gain any support at all, and may be dismissed as not having been borne out in practice. It seems that the monarch has always sought prior authorization before speaking in public. On the other hand, though the interpretation given on each occasion by the Government was sustained by a majority and was thus an interpretation having the support of current practice, it was one that the Opposition refused to accept.² The correct constitutional position remained, therefore, undecided and doubtful. There being no general agreement, there was no acknowledged constitutional convention. Each occasion on which the monarch voiced opinions not shared by his ministers, was denounced by the Opposition as unconstitutional; and past occasions, to which appeal was made, were not accepted as valid precedents. Thus, the current practice of the monarch expressing, with the approval of his ministers, opinions that they then refused to recognize as an official statement of policy cannot, because of the lack of the necessary consensus of opinion in support of such a practice, be said ever to have become a valid constitutional rule.

The truth is that this practice, current in the reign of Leopold II, arose out of a very peculiar situation. There can rarely ever have been a constitutional monarch whose personal views were so well known on so many topics. Leopold II was, in this respect, a law unto himself and it is this which must endear him to a student of politics. The situation was made possible, first, by the fact that his views were shared by practically no one else. He was a very strong-minded

¹ *Annales parlementaires*. Séance du 6 juillet, 1909, pp. 1876-9.

² The stand taken by the Government in 1904 and 1909 has been indicated in the text above. In 1897, it was thought a sufficient explanation that the King was speaking to 'a group of persons received in private audience' and on technical matters. It was said: 'The King grants audiences to persons drawn from many walks of life and naturally the conversation turns on matters with which they are familiar and which interest them. What is more simple and more natural than that the King talked about military matters with the generals he received on June 13th' (*Ibid.* Séance du 25 juin, 1897, p. 1750). What was irregular, however, was that words spoken in private audience should have been made public.

monarch who cared passionately for the security and aggrandisement of his country. But few Belgians shared either his worries or his ambitions. By and large they were confident that Belgium's frontiers had been made safe by international treaty and there was, therefore, widespread opposition to the measures that Leopold advocated in an effort to strengthen the country's defences. Nor were the Belgians particularly interested in the vast territory that had been carved out of Africa and ruled by Leopold as his own personal kingdom until it was ripe for handing over to the Belgian nation. Indeed, they regarded this new possession with great suspicion. They did not consider it and other overseas enterprises as did Leopold; namely, the means whereby Belgium might maintain her commercial prosperity. To Leopold's pleas to invest abroad they turned a deaf ear. Secondly, not only were Leopold's ideas and opinions completely out of tune with political opinion in the country; he was also a highly unpopular monarch. To the resentment aroused by the expression of unpopular opinions was added the criticism caused by his private life and his attitude to family misfortune. His unpopularity grew, in fact, to be such that on the day of his funeral a certain disrespect was shown him; and earlier he had been forced to abandon the custom of opening the new parliamentary session, so hostile had become the reception that was accorded him.

It is therefore not surprising that the Government had no objection to the King airing his 'ideas'. There was little chance of their finding public support. During the course of the debate that took place in 1904, a member of the Opposition described the situation in accurate if somewhat familiar terms. He thought the attitude of the Government could be expressed as follows:

The King has a bee in his bonnet. Give him half a chance, and he will drag in the question of *service personnel*, and it would be most surprising if he didn't. However, we, his ministers, pay no attention.¹

Practically nobody paid any attention, least of all the Opposition; this was the crucially important fact. The Government could risk giving the King an opportunity to express his personal opinions because they knew well that the Opposition would not claim them as their own. Of course, the Opposition always sought to embarrass the Government. The latter continued to enjoy the King's confidence, but the Opposition did not hesitate to take full advantage of a situation in which the King's ministers disowned his opinions and so had some difficulty in demonstrating this. The Opposition also sometimes sought to show, in 1904 for instance, that its own policy

¹ Ibid. Chambre des Représentants. Séance du 6 décembre, 1904, p. 207.

was more akin to the point of view expressed by the King than was the policy of his official advisers; but, fortunately for the monarchy, few, if any, could have been deceived by such sophisticated arguments. In any case, the Opposition never sought to make the ideas to which the King gave expression a practical political issue. This is the important point, for it is this which ensured that the King remained outside of party politics even though he canvassed ideas of his own. So few shared his opinions that none of the parties could profit much by them. This extraordinary situation allowed Leopold II to remain outside party politics even when he intervened on an issue that was to some extent a party issue. His public support being that of a lone and stubborn patriot who did not much share either the opinions or sympathies of his people, it evoked little response and therefore provoked little objection on constitutional grounds.

Such a state of affairs must be judged exceptional. And for this reason the practice of the Belgian monarch giving expression to opinions that went beyond the official policy of his government must also be judged exceptional; it cannot be considered a rule valid for more normal times. Normally the monarch will enjoy a certain prestige and exercise considerable influence on public opinion. Ministers are unlikely to consent to the monarch advocating, in public, policies to which they are themselves opposed. Even when the monarch's opinions are unlikely to find much public support and certainly not the support of the Opposition party, ministers will probably be reluctant to give their consent. For instance, in 1897, the first occasion on which Leopold's preference for a system of *service personnel* was made public, the Government had understood that the King would be receiving a group of generals in private audience; it undoubtedly had not been anticipated that his words would reach a wider public.¹ In 1904, the Government had its own good reasons for publishing the letter in which a system of *service personnel* was again advocated: it strongly supported the Government in other respects, and the Government felt in need of such support. Finally, in 1909, it was clear that a policy of overseas investment was not altogether unacceptable to the Government. It was not in a position to make the suggestion itself and, in the circumstances, there was little or no risk in allowing the King to launch his idea. The Government therefore raised no objection. But whatever the reasons why ministers may or may not consent to the monarch expressing opinions that they decline to accept as part of their official policy, it is clear that consent to this is only possible in a situation such as existed under Leopold II. Those occasions on which Leopold II publicly expressed opinions that did not reflect the official policy of his ministers cannot be held precedents for more

¹ See note 2 on p. 608.

normal times. They must be clearly distinguished from those other occasions when Leopold II was supporting policies already adopted by his ministers. The former practice is peculiar to the situation existing under Leopold II, whereas the latter practice has been continued under both Albert and Leopold III, and is a well-established, if somewhat hazardous expedient, thought justified on those occasions when it has been needed to rally public opinion in support of certain policies of supreme national importance.

3

Consideration must now be given to those occasions when the Belgian monarch has intervened publicly, not in support of a given policy, but either as mediator in some political controversy or as guardian of the constitution. Albert, for example, successfully mediated in an issue that was bitterly debated just before his death in 1934. There had been considerable opposition to the proposed reinstatement of several former civil servants, accused of collaboration during the German occupation and retired from the service. A suggestion from the King that the whole question be referred to an impartial tribunal calmed public opinion and averted a serious crisis that threatened at one time to break up the Government. What is of particular interest is that the King's mediation, to be successful, had to be made public. It was made public precisely because party feeling within the Government coalition was so high that there was some nervousness lest the solution adopted should 'seem the victory of any one party or group'. Publication of the letter in which the King made his suggestion ensured that the decision was 'a sort of arbitration to which all were agreed'.¹ Moreover, even before the King first communicated with his Prime Minister, the latter's thoughts had already turned to the idea of an intervention by the King.² The whole episode is another example of the success with which the Belgian monarchy has been used to solve some urgent political problem, despite the obvious risks.

An example of the monarch intervening as guardian of the Constitution is that of Leopold III in 1939. At a private meeting with his ministers on February 2nd, the King had already protested against the general manner in which the parliamentary régime was functioning, and in particular against the irregular and irresponsible usurpation of authority on the part of the organized political

¹ 'La dernière intervention politique du Roi Albert.' *Académie royale de Belgique. Bulletin de la Classe des Lettres*, 1950. Fifth Series, vol. XXXVI, pp. 228ff. The King's letter is reprinted in *Revue de l'Administration* vol. LXXVII, p. 55.

² *Ibid.*, p. 228.

parties. A month later, on the occasion of the dissolution of Parliament, the warning was made public.¹

As I had regretfully to observe at a recent meeting of ministers, the constitutional principles, upon which our political institutions have been till now securely based, are more and more frequently disregarded. There has been a shifting of responsibility: the separation of powers is no longer respected: organizations without any legal authority intervene in the formation and break-up of governments: the executive power is no longer being exercised in accordance with the rules of the Constitution: and the Head of the State finds that he sometimes must, if he is to avoid stepping into politics, approve decisions on which he has not been consulted.

This is a formidable indictment to be made by one who must beware of exposing himself to political controversy. The prestige of Parliament was, however, at a low ebb, and the King was only giving expression to criticisms widely made. The intransigence of the parties was commonly held to blame for the parliamentary anarchy and the impossibility of forming a stable government with the necessary authority to govern the country. The King was inspired by a hope and belief that if the members of Parliament, and especially the ministers, no longer acted as if they were the mandated delegates of their parties, and if the Government ceased to be the impotent creature of bargaining among the parties, the country's political institutions would again function as satisfactorily as they had done in the past. The King had, in the course of the previous eighteen months, already had some success in combating the influence of the party organizations when it was a question of appointing or accepting the resignation of ministers. The recourse to a dissolution of Parliament, at the King's own insistence, and his appeal to the nation to return a Parliament that 'will support a Government, both respected and capable of maintaining the country's prestige', was a bold attempt to break the hold of the organized political parties and to introduce some stability and order into the feverish disorder of the preceding years. It marks an unprecedented attempt on the part of a constitutional monarch to restore the régime to ways that the King considered not only more judicious but also more in accord with traditional but neglected constitutional principles.

These two examples, that of Albert's mediation in 1934 and that of Leopold III's protest in 1939, are further illustrations of the public rôle that the Belgian monarch has not hesitated to assume when it has been thought a solution or result urgently desired in the interests of all can thereby be brought about. The risk is, of course,

¹ See *Recueil des Documents*, 1936-49. Annexe 6.

that the monarch will be exposed to political controversy, and this must always be weighed in the balance. Nor is the risk merely at the moment of some actual intervention. It grows with each occasion on which some such action is taken, and soon the monarch may come to be expected to intervene on any and every occasion. It has already been noted that if a constitutional monarch is attributed with a reserve power of dismissing his ministers or of enforcing a dissolution of Parliament, he is thereby credited with a certain responsibility, and on critical occasions he may be put in a position in which he can hardly avoid being dragged into party politics. A similar situation may arise whenever the monarch has attributed to him, or exercises, other reserve powers to intervene publicly in the political life of the country. He may find himself faced, on the one side, by those who will interpret any action on his part as an expression of sympathy with their political opponents and, on the other, by those who will interpret a refusal to act in the same manner, the monarch being held responsible for whatever takes place. Leopold III was in fact put in just such a position in 1939 when, without him being consulted, a certain M. Martens, once under sentence of death for collaboration but subsequently pardoned, was appointed a member of the Academy of Flemish Medicine. Anti-Flemish opinion was outraged. It is true that the situation might have been avoided had the King been consulted, as was indeed his right. But the situation having once arisen, the King was caught up in the political controversy that the appointment aroused. In the same message to the nation, already partly quoted, Leopold took the occasion to refer to the invidious position in which he had been placed.

When the principles of our Constitution are forgotten in this manner, the Head of the State can no longer fulfil the duties incumbent on him. Controversy centres most improperly around the person of the King, whereas his ministers are alone responsible to Parliament for acts bearing the King's signature. Furthermore, the wish to add, to the political and legal responsibility of his ministers, a sort of moral responsibility on the part of the King is simply a misunderstanding, likely to mislead public opinion. Those who, in certain cases, echo spiteful or merely tendentious rumours run the risk of committing, perhaps unawares, an injustice to the sole citizen in the Kingdom who is denied the means that all others have of justifying what they say or do.¹

This is the danger whenever a constitutional monarch assumes a rôle other than formal in public affairs. The fiction that the monarch

¹ Ibid.

is not responsible for what is done will be difficult to maintain, and however skilful he may be in preventing such situations from developing, this may not always be possible. Belgian constitutional history furnishes, however, several notable examples of the monarch successfully intervening in a variety of ways. The recent constitutional crisis is likely to impose almost complete silence upon the Crown, for some time at least. But when memories grow dim the monarchy may once again be in a position to continue the practice of previous reigns. However, one practice at least is unlikely to be resumed, namely that whereby the monarch is allowed to express opinions which his ministers refuse to accept as an expression of the Government's official policy.

ROUSSEAU AND KIERKEGAARD

RONALD GRIMSLEY

THAT Kierkegaard himself was aware of a certain affinity between his own position and that of Rousseau in his last years is revealed by the *Journal* for 1851,¹ for, although he there chastises Rousseau for having failed to accept the full implications of his situation — 'here is an example of what it means not to be well read in Christianity' — the exceptional nature of Rousseau's circumstances and outlook could not but remind Kierkegaard of his own 'misunderstood' case. The purpose of this essay is not to examine the relatively minor question of any possible influence of Rousseau upon Kierkegaard but to attempt a comparison of the two thinkers in the light of their attempts to grapple with personal and cultural problems which are in some ways similar.

If we disregard for a moment the purely personal aspect and limit attention to the cultural issue, it is at once clear that Rousseau and Kierkegaard are at one in their fierce opposition to values which most of their 'enlightened' contemporaries accept as irrefragable proofs of modern progress. What the majority treats as a source of proud self-satisfaction and a convincing reason for healthy optimism they condemn as marks of moral and spiritual decadence. For Rousseau the age of 'enlightenment' with its overwhelming emphasis upon 'civilization' and all its alleged benefits is a time of mortal peril for man's soul, because civilization is the evil influence which is robbing man of the possibility of being truly himself in accordance with the promptings of his own authentic nature. The views which the 'progressive' intellectuals of his day put forward as happy portents of an approaching millenium Rousseau dismisses as 'desolating

¹ Kierkegaard's remarks were prompted by a reading of Rousseau's unfinished and very personal last work, *Les Réveries du Promeneur Solitaire*. He writes: '... There are analogies in Rousseau's life with the truly Christian conflicts (to do good and suffer for it, to do good and thereby make oneself and others unhappy). That is what he cannot endure; he complains that it paralyses him so terribly. How it would have strengthened him had it been really clear to him that such is the properly Christian conflict. But as he is completely ignorant of Christianity he is paralysed on the one hand, and on the other falls into the conceit that he is the only man who has ever suffered in this way'. A marginal addition to the entry reads: 'he lacks the ideal, the Christian ideal which could teach him, by humbling him, how little he suffered compared with the saints, and the ideal which might have supported him in his endeavour and prevented him from sinking into poetic dreams and inactivity. He is an example of how difficult man finds mortification' (*The Journals of Søren Kierkegaard*, a selection edited and translated by Alexander Dru, Oxford University Press, 1938. Entries Nos. 1204-5, p. 436).

doctrines' which alienate man from his true self and so offer little improvement upon the obscurantism and intolerance for they are meant to be a final substitute. Kierkegaard also attacks the complacent optimism of a century which claims to have found mental and spiritual liberation in the triumph of Hegelian rationalism and an official 'Christendom' in which all men are Christians 'as a matter of course'. In his view his contemporaries have thus lost sight of the vital question of what it means to become an 'individual' in the fullest Christian sense. The overweening pretensions of Hegelianism have, he argues, merely served to absorb man into a system in which concern for the individual soul has been replaced by a preoccupation with metaphysical concepts which are intended to explain the movement of 'world-history' rather than the meaning of unique human existence.

Both thinkers are agreed in combating a type of metaphysical speculation which is so concerned with 'ultimate' ontological questions that it has completely lost sight of genuinely human problems. The 'manikin of a professor', says Kierkegaard humorously of Hegel, is so busy 'explaining the whole of existence' that 'he has in distraction forgotten his own name: namely that he is a human being, not a fantastic three-eighths of a paragraph'. The man — and he is again thinking of Hegel and his 'system' — who spends his time 'building enormous castles' has overlooked the humiliating fact that he is actually living in a shack close by. Rousseau also dismisses as unreal the type of thinking which dissolves into misty abstractions. The essential point about a true philosophy, he insists, is that it should deal with what is of 'immediate interest' to man, 'interest' here being understood not in a narrowly pragmatic sense but as involving whatever has direct bearing on man's moral and spiritual development. Each thinker is engaged in resisting a detached, impersonal mode of thought which runs the grave risk of ignoring the personal life with its concern for concrete human problems.

The hostility or indifference encountered by this struggle against values which others find self-evident causes Rousseau and Kierkegaard to retreat into a solitude which they deliberately accept as a necessary condition for the fulfilment of their life's work. The solitude of the misunderstood artist is, of course, a commonplace of Romanticism but in this case there are certain features which merit special attention. Although the initial protest is stimulated by the refusal of an individual sensibility to accept the current values in the midst of which it has been forced to live, the thinker's subsequent development is not just a linear extension of his early viewpoint. As a solitary man who has defied the world, he cannot remain satisfied with a purely critical scrutiny of the offending ideas. His

very gesture of defiance becomes part of a constructive attitude which, refusing to rest content with opposing 'true' to 'false' ideas, goes on to challenge contemporaries to a fundamental re-adjustment of their whole existence. This means that the thinker, in his turn, must prove his sincerity by transforming his personal life in accordance with the requirements of his newly found ideals. There is thus a kind of dialectical interplay between the discovery of intellectual truth and the modification of personal being. To the question: what is true? is added the further question: what am I? and the difficulty of this new situation is that it implies not a mere juxtaposition of these two problems but their complex and intimate interpenetration. Henceforth it is not a question of substituting one set of values for another, just as one piece which does not fit a jigsaw puzzle may be replaced by another of the correct shape. The intrusion of the thinker's own personality into the problem profoundly modifies the whole conception of truth with which it is bound up. Truth is no longer limited to the idea of intellectual assent to objectively valid propositions but is partly dependent on the personality's choice of its own mode of existence.

This process of inner withdrawal, by which the solitary thinker becomes preoccupied with himself, not for purely selfish reasons but as a pre-requisite for the discovery of new insights, is, however, liable to create — as in the case of Rousseau and Kierkegaard — a special sort of difficulty. The man who is so sure of the world's error may suddenly discover that he himself is exposed to a danger of a particular kind. Self-examination reveals the existence of a psychological anomaly which makes him an exception. This may lead to a decision which will carry him to a higher plane of being but it also threatens to reduce him to a level which is below that of his fellow-men. All his life Kierkegaard was tormented by the 'thorn in the flesh', the mysterious idiosyncrasy which sometimes made him feel desperately unhappy and yet also evoked the possibility of a leap into faith. He hopes that the 'thorn in the flesh' will help him to 'spring higher than anyone with sound feet' but he is also aware that it may induce him 'to sit down and look complainingly upon the thorn instead of rising higher with its help' (*Journals*, Entry No. 670, p. 210). Rousseau was also an exception, but his case is complicated by the presence of a psychological abnormality which took the form of a psychotic disturbance marked by systematic paranoid delusions. He was thus tormented by a state of mind which was largely devoid of insight into its true meaning. The fact is made all the graver because the onset of the disorder largely coincided with his efforts to achieve a new sense of selfhood. Nevertheless Rousseau was constantly aware of being different from other men and realized that this created a problem which could be overcome only

by a radical modification of his whole attitude. In his last years he was still searching anxiously for a philosophy which would be truly 'his', as he says in the *Rêveries*, and would enable him to answer that vital question: 'what am I?' In spite of the pressure of the most nightmarish delusions we see—in the *Dialogues*—a persistent groping towards an attitude which would allow his life to be an 'example' to others. Although Kierkegaard criticizes Rousseau for his failure to make his exceptional position an occasion for humility instead of false pride, it is plain that the sense of being an 'exception' was a powerful influence in both their lives.

There is one further point which makes the comparison significant. Both thinkers see that the challenge of the psychological difficulty can only be met if the problem is transferred from the psychological to the non-psychological and especially the religious plane. If they both look for a viewpoint which will bring harmony into the broken and discordant elements of their personality, they realize that they can find this only in an attitude which has 'value' and is grounded in more than purely subjective feelings of satisfaction. Hence, for Rousseau, philosophy cannot be complete without the presence of God which will serve both as its rational justification and as a source of personal consolation. Kierkegaard realizes that, though he is cut off from the 'universal human', he is not thereby excused from identifying himself with an attitude which not only brings peace to his own soul but is a valid challenge to others to accept the full implications of 'what it means to become a Christian'.

It is at this point, however, that the paths followed by the two men begin to diverge. Rousseau's basic solution to the difficulty created by the need of finding a philosophy which accords with the demands of his own personality and yet seems to offer an adequate solution to the wider cultural problem is to turn back to a forgotten or concealed reality ('nature'), for it is this which will eventually permit man to be re-integrated into the 'order of things' from which the historical accident of 'civilization' (and the exceptional circumstances of Rousseau's own life) have temporarily dislodged him. Kierkegaard, on the other hand, sees salvation both for himself and others in an attitude which overcomes the conflict within man by radically transforming his nature in response to the call of a transcendent spiritual reality. Rousseau's method is basically one of re-discovery, Kierkegaard's of re-creation. It is true that both thinkers appeal ultimately to God but they do so in a totally different way. For Rousseau God's existence serves as a kind of guarantee that 'nature' has really been re-discovered. For Kierkegaard the thought of God is intended chiefly to make man leap into a new and unexplored realm of experience.

By a return to nature Rousseau seems to have meant a re-discovery

of what 'is' as opposed to an acceptance of what 'appears'. What 'appears' is artificial and inessential because it is the result of 'opinion', 'society' and the distorting passions engendered by 'civilization', whilst what 'is' reveals the being created by God, the 'nature' which man is and to which God intended him to be related. This normative conception of nature may assume various concrete forms. In its broadest sense it is already a theological idea, but it may also have a historical and mythical aspect as when, for example, it is identified with real or imagined social and political groups which are supposed to have escaped or to have remained relatively free from the corrupting influence of 'civilization'. Nature may, therefore, include the past (when it evokes primitive, unspoilt communities which no longer exist) or the present (when it recalls simple societies which are still extant or little states — like Geneva — which show that some degree of natural life is still to be found nearer home). Nature may also have a future aspect of almost apocalyptic power since it may suggest an ideal or visionary aspect of life as a condition of existence towards which man may still hope to strive, an as yet unrealized but possible society which has recovered the pristine goodness and simplicity of 'natural' man. In so far as this vision of a perfect society inspires men to action it may well have — in spite of Rousseau's timidity in applying his own theories — political and social consequences of a revolutionary kind.

Rousseau's general emphasis is therefore an optimistic one. However unhappy the individual may be (and this misfortune is inevitable in the present state of mankind), the essential harmony of the universal order cannot be seriously affected. Even if man misuses his freedom, the ultimate purposes of Providence will not be permanently disturbed, for God has established a harmonious relationship between the natural man and the world of which he forms part. The civilized environment in which most of us live may be divided and corrupt, but this is not the true world but a mask which conceals the 'ideal' reality which lies hidden behind such deceptive and unprepossessing appearances.

The psychological aspect is also very important, for 'nature' includes the human as well as the non-human forms of existence. It follows, therefore, that man, as a part of the nature created by God, is essentially good. Furthermore, if man is good, nothing that is a part of his fundamental being can be truly bad. Even reason is not condemned in itself, as many critics have supposed, for Rousseau will never say 'credo quia absurdum'. Wisdom consists in acknowledging the limits of a speculative reason which falls into error as soon as it seeks to go beyond the limits prescribed for it by nature. Reason is not itself corrupt (though it may be used for corrupt purposes) but only limited — in the sense that it cannot transcend

matters which are of interest to man. Thus reason can know that God exists, that He is Will, Intelligence and Goodness, because these aspects of the Divine Being are relevant to man's moral and spiritual experience. Beyond this it is impossible to go. It cannot penetrate the mystery of God as He is in Himself. Reason can affirm His existence but not penetrate His Essence. It is limited, however, not merely as far as transcendental questions are concerned but also in many matters pertaining to the moral life. Here, fortunately, Providence has provided us with a safe guide, since every man is endowed with a 'divine instinct', an infallible 'inner voice' which is 'conscience'. Conscience thus transcends reason because it helps man at the very moment when reason fails, but it will never directly contradict reason by urging him to absurd and irrational conduct. Its purpose is to provide man with a means of enabling him to enjoy a more harmonious relationship with God, the universe and his own true self.¹

The general effect and, in some measure, the purpose of this outlook are to diminish the sense of tension and inner division which affects every man who is sensitive to the realities of the civilized world. Ultimately Rousseau does this by showing that man's apprehension of his own reality is inseparable from his awareness of objective reality (the universe and God). His concept of nature is aimed, as I have insisted, at effecting this union, or perhaps we should say re-union, of man and the world. To the extent to which it involves making certain statements about the ultimate nature of reality (for example, what God has created must be essentially good) this viewpoint is still strongly metaphysical, although not quite in the manner of more highly speculative philosophies.

Can, however, Rousseau's complete 'philosophy' be identified with the 'system' elaborated in his didactic works?² Are the essen-

¹ For a fuller discussion of the rôle of reason in Rousseau see Robert Derathé, *Le Rationalisme de Rousseau* (Paris, 1948).

² It has of course been denied by many critics that his philosophy has any basic unity. Although it is impossible to discuss this question within the limits of the present article, it may perhaps be relevant to say here that, in my view, Rousseau does strive towards a systematic conceptualization of certain basic intuitions which he feels to be consistent with one another and which he has striven to link together in a unified whole. It is equally true, however, — and this is one of the interesting things about his work — that the unity of his system is constantly threatened by the pressure of certain other ideas having existential and personal roots (cf., for example, ambiguities in his account of the relations of 'goodness' and 'virtue', two qualities which he usually distinguishes but which in unguarded moments tend to merge). It is doubtful whether the intrusion of these personal elements is powerful enough to destroy the unity of his system, because, as I have suggested below, they are feelings whose full implications are obscurely felt and not consciously perceived. For a recent discussion of Rousseau's philosophy see Pierre Burgelin, *La Philosophie de l'Existence de J. J. Rousseau* (Paris, 1952).

tials of Rousseau's thought to be found in the writings which are dedicated to the defence of 'truth' and 'justice' and the betterment of 'humanity'? At times — and especially in his later years when he regarded his writer's mission as over — he seemed to be aware that his personal involvement in the crisis of his time resisted a complete intellectual analysis of all he thought and felt. The production of a 'philosophy' was the creation of something public and general, whereas the aspiration of the living individual was towards a more intimate and personal mode of expression. Rousseau had become partly aware of this difficulty at the time of the famous reform of 1756 for he there made an earnest attempt to adapt practice to precept. Yet he came to see that more than this was involved, for when very personal decisions are at stake the sharp distinction usually made between the two domains becomes blurred, the precept being modified or even created by the practice. A man's philosophy (as in Rousseau's case) may tell him that the universal order, being made and sustained by God, is permanent and objective in its main features and that consequently wisdom consists in conforming to its requirements. Moreover, this is facilitated by Rousseau's belief that man's nature does for the most part harmonize with this system, often to the point of enabling him to identify himself with it in privileged moments of ecstasy. Yet in spite of the possibility of this quasi-mystical absorption of man in nature, a difficulty still remains. It is not man in general who must make the decision to return to nature but an individual man who is engaged in a concrete situation which is in many ways peculiar to himself. There thus develops a tension between the world of order and the individual who is in some degree isolated in his own particular life and so made aware of a certain incommensurability between the objective world and his own unique existence.

Since it was inconceivable to Rousseau that God should have created any irreducible anomaly in the universe, the idea of a sharp cleavage between human existence and the general order is never more than obscurely felt as a personal difficulty, for it does not attain the status of a complete concept which is in need of intellectual clarification. The problem for Rousseau remains existential rather than philosophical. Hence its appearance must be sought for less in the didactic works (though it may play a subordinate rôle in them too) than in the personal preoccupations of his last years. There, however, the issue is complicated by the growing pressure of abnormal psychological factors which had never been quite absent from Rousseau's life but which now threatened to erupt into his existence with catastrophic force. Driven to see himself more and more as an 'unique exception', he fearfully senses that his relation to the ideal world of his system is becoming insecure. His reaction, however, is

not to probe deliberately this disquiet but to suppress it or treat it as non-existent. The conjunction of a number of philosophical and psychological factors enables him to do this with some measure of success. The idea which had furnished the basic premise of his system ('natural goodness') now provides the foundation of his individual existence by constantly upholding the belief that his exceptional position is the result of his own extraordinary innocence. Rousseau is confirmed in this conviction by his paranoid symptoms, for these enable him to avoid any absolutely catastrophic split within his personality by projecting repressed feelings of guilt and worthlessness on to the external world. He can thus preserve some sense of personal security, even though it is at the cost of giving ever more room to those compensatory psychological mechanisms which serve to make his particular desires the conscious and unconscious basis of all value. Henceforth he selects for attention only those aspects of external reality which help him to remain safe within his feelings of superiority or else allow him to abdicate all sense of responsibility by means of an identification with some reality greater than himself. Thus we see Rousseau oscillating in his last years between various subjective escape mechanisms of a psychological kind and a pre-occupation with those aspects of the external world which permit him to forget his inner conflicts.¹

If Rousseau's efforts aim at eluding rather than overcoming the inner conflict created by his own peculiar psychological situation, Kierkegaard's efforts move in the opposite direction. Instead of trying to bridge the psychological gulf by assimilating the self to the ordered perfection of an ideal world or an idealized projection of his own nature, he deliberately accepts the reality of the 'thorn in the flesh', thereby intensifying — for the time being at least — the sense of inner conflict. He believes that the only means of escaping from the dilemma is through a leap which will carry him from his personal difficulties to a higher (religious) stage of existence. This will not mean the destruction of psychological experience but its integration into a qualitatively different plane of being. Where Rousseau seeks to re-establish continuity Kierkegaard deliberately pursues discontinuity. The immediate consequence of this decision to make the 'leap' is an intensification of inner strain. This is revealed in the emergence of the mood of 'dread'. Dread is not inspired by fear of any particular object because, strictly speaking, it is of 'nothing'. It springs from the consciousness that this leap which is so radically to transform the character of man's existence is accompanied by no pre-ordained assurance of its success. The 'fear and trembling'

¹ The ultimate pattern of his reactions is, however, complex, as I have tried to show in an article in *French Studies*, vol. VII, January 1953, pp. 1-17, 'Subjective and Objective Elements in Rousseau's *Rêveries*'.

experienced by Abraham as he decides to sacrifice Isaac is increased — according to Kierkegaard — by the thought that he is, as the man about to make the 'leap', an exception whose action is condemned as irrational and evil by a public conscience which esteems paternal feeling as a necessary constituent of all sound morality. In the same way Kierkegaard's own sense of being an 'exception', of being cut off from the universal human, is imbued with a certain ambivalence which is compounded of hope and despair. He hopes that the leap will bring spiritual fulfilment but he is afraid too that it may lead him into grievous sin. How can he be sure that in acting as the exception he is not following a demonic instead of a divine urge? The anguish provoked by this possibility is increased by the thought that imprisonment within the 'aesthetic' (natural) life serves only to make him more conscious of the obstacles which stand between him and salvation. The challenge of this situation is apt not only to paralyse the will but to develop an almost demonic satisfaction with the 'shut in' condition, the satisfaction of the man who 'loves his torment and will not let it go'. Because he senses all these dangers Kierkegaard interprets his exceptional position as one which demands mortification and humility and not (as in Rousseau's case) a proud affirmation of his superiority over other men.

A common stress upon the importance of God's existence — for without God they would both, as they admit, be in a state of absolute despair — leads nevertheless to widely differing attitudes. For Kierkegaard spiritual life is characterized by 'action (i.e. inner decision) — suffering', whilst for Rousseau belief in God is 'consoling' and, in his later years, is taken to justify 'abstention from action'. The thought of God's transcendence fills Kierkegaard with a feeling of humility and sometimes of anguish for 'to be loved by God and to love God is to suffer'. He knows that man cannot stop there and that he must be joyful in his faith in God — a God whose existence can never be proved by reason but only affirmed by faith — but it is a joy which comes from the sense of being able, in his own favourite metaphor, 'to float joyful over twenty-thousand fathoms'. Rousseau, on the other hand, sees in God a triumphant justification of 'natural goodness' — both his own and that of 'man'. God's existence can only be a source of comfort, never of anguish.

Although both recognize the necessity of going beyond the psychological problem of the 'exception', they do so in quite a different manner. Since, in Rousseau's opinion, the obstacles which stand in the way of human happiness (and his emphasis is on happiness rather than on salvation) are extraneous to man's essential nature, the main task to be undertaken is that of removing the pressures which distort or conceal man's real goodness. The aim of education will be 'negative', because it will be concerned with seeing that man's

naturally good nature is allowed to develop in an environment that is largely free from corrupting influences. Once the natural man has been rediscovered it should be possible to produce a social and political system which will preserve his new-found freedom. For Kierkegaard, on the other hand, neither the educational nor the political systems, however perfect they may seem to be, can in themselves seriously affect the fundamental problem of salvation. The remedy required is far more radical because it is man's very nature which has been corrupted through sin, 'original sin' (a doctrine which was so abhorrent to Rousseau) being an essential part of every man's nature. The only solution to the difficulty is for men to have recourse to an attitude (the leap into faith) which transcends the sphere of sinful being by means of a re-creation of the self and the assumption of a new manhood. Yet judged by the criterion of reason, such a modification and 'transvaluation' of ordinary values must be condemned as folly and absurdity.

This basic difference in attitude is reflected in their reactions to the specific challenge of Christianity. If they both call themselves 'Christians', it is only because the word has a different meaning for each. Rousseau does not go beyond an admiration for the 'pure and elevated morality' of the Gospel, whilst his feeling for Jesus is one of respect rather than worship. He emphasizes, it is true, the limitations of reason and extols the superiority of conscience and in this sense he may be said to subordinate reason to faith. Basically, however, reason and conscience are both human faculties which are sufficient in themselves to bring man to God. This is Rousseau's main point about religion: that the 'natural man' is endowed with the means of coming, of his own accord, to an adequate knowledge of God. The presence of a Church claiming special authority and indeed the idea of any kind of supernatural revelation merely obscure the simple and harmonious relationship which each man should be able — of himself — to establish with God. 'How many men between God and me!' complains Rousseau. The whole conception of the Incarnation and the various dogmas which follow from it remain a source of scandal for Rousseau since they violate his deepest convictions concerning man's natural goodness. Because there is no such thing as 'original sin' and man can save himself through his own relationship to God, why should he need any intermediary to show him the way? He rejects Christianity as a revealed religion because it presupposes the intrusion into human life of a particular historical happening capable of undermining the whole idea of that 'natural religion' which, for Rousseau, is 'written by nature in indelible characters in the depth of man's heart'.

In Kierkegaard's eyes the paradoxical and apparently irrational character of historical Christianity, with its emphasis upon the idea

that eternal happiness can depend upon the individual's response to a particular event in time, is what constitutes the real basis of its appeal, for it provides an authentic solution to the fundamental dilemma created by man's position as a being tormented by the necessity of making an absolute choice which offers no rational promise of success. It is true that the Incarnation will at first only intensify the offence to reason and common sense because of its suggestion that God has revealed Himself in the person of a particular man and one who suffered a humiliating death on the Cross. The whole notion of the Incarnation suggests Offence and Paradox — an 'absurd' solution to man's spiritual problem. Yet it is a solution demanded by the very contradictions of man's own existential situation, in fact, the only one capable, says Kierkegaard, of bridging the 'yawning abyss' which separates man from God. Faith in a transcendent reality will, therefore, impel man towards a course of action which his immanent reason condemns as irrational. The disjunction between reason and faith thus becomes for Kierkegaard the basis of a triumphant vindication of Christianity at the level of lived experience.

It remains to consider a final point of comparison, namely their respective attitudes towards organized religion. Curiously enough, their conclusions are not what one might immediately expect — the 'natural man's' rejection of official religion and the 'Christian's' advocacy of the Church. Rousseau's advice concerning the attitude to be adopted towards the religion established in each country is very conservative. The necessity of maintaining public order gives each government, argues Rousseau, the right to demand obedience to the established cult. He thinks that this need not occasion any anxiety to the conscience because every man is still left free to follow the essential cult which is that of the 'heart'. As long as he accepts the dogmas which influence his moral activity (i.e. those of natural religion), he can safely treat all the rest with 'respectful doubt'. Once a man is convinced that no revealed religion can substantiate its claims to exclusive devotion, it does not very much matter to which external cult he gives his formal adherence. Kierkegaard's attitude is the exact opposite of this. The uncompromising demands made by Christianity upon the individual must never be attenuated or made to seem less severe than they actually are. Yet the Church's error is to have toned down the absolute character of this radical 'cure' for sin. It has done this by making Christianity appear a 'respectable' and 'comfortable' doctrine, one that can be readily accepted by bourgeois society. In so doing it has destroyed the uniqueness of God's claim upon man; it has profoundly altered and corrupted the original intentions of the founder of Christianity. In his last years, therefore, we see Kierkegaard waging a fierce campaign against the Lutheran

State Church — a campaign in the midst of which he was to die.

Starting, then, from positions which are in many ways similar, the two thinkers are led to very different conclusions. I have been concerned to stress only one of the factors responsible for this divergence, namely, the nature of their separate responses to the challenge of solitude and the particular psychological problems connected with it. A full explanation of their two attitudes (as opposed to the basic delineation and comparison which have been attempted here) would naturally have to give detailed consideration to all the various influences to which they were subjected, not the least of them being the particular cultural situation in which each thinker found himself. Although they were both brought up in a Protestant environment, they were not submitted to the same kind of early religious influence. Rousseau spent his early years in the ambience of a Genevan Protestantism which was ethical rather than doctrinal in its general emphasis. The Genevan pastors of the eighteenth century cannot be said to have rejected the main Christian dogmas, but the tendency was for them to subordinate those dogmatic issues which seemed offensive to reason to a preoccupation with moral questions. Geneva, therefore, left a moral and perhaps political rather than a theological mark on Rousseau's mind and, although this fact undoubtedly affected his later education (for the most part, that of an autodidact), it also permitted him to undergo a number of philosophical influences which differed in important respects from those of his early life. Among these a certain type of European rationalism, especially that which had a Platonic or Platonizing character, has been accorded an important, though not of course an exclusive place. Kierkegaard, on the other hand, underwent in his earliest years the powerful influence of Danish Lutheranism, and more especially of a Lutheranism which was mediated to him through the outlook and personality of a father to whom he was emotionally attached and who sought above all to impress upon him the suffering figure of the crucified Christ. In his first years, therefore, he was in some degree insulated against any permanent subjugation by contemporary Romanticism and Hegelianism, important though these influences were for him in certain ways.

The comparison that has been here attempted has not been concerned — except incidentally — with giving a historical and biographical explanation of the differences between Rousseau and Kierkegaard but rather with throwing into relief some significant aspects of their basic attitudes. Once the full implications of their respective outlooks have been grasped, it becomes clear they are interesting not only in their own right but as two striking examples of a distinction which has persisted in various forms throughout the whole history of European culture — a distinction which may perhaps be best summed up as that usually made between nature and grace.

THE THEORY OF THE GOOD WILL

V. C. WALSH

A good will is not good because of what it affects or accomplishes — because of its fitness for attaining some proposed end: it is good through its willing alone — that is, good in itself. Considered in itself it is to be esteemed beyond comparison as far higher than anything it could ever bring about merely in order to favour some inclination or, if you like, the sum total of inclinations. Even if, by some special disfavour of destiny or by the niggardly endowment of step-motherly nature, this will is entirely lacking in power to carry out its intentions; if by its utmost effort it still accomplishes nothing, and only good will is left (not, admittedly, as a mere wish, but as the straining of every means so far as they are in our control); even then it would still shine like a jewel for its own sake as something which has its full value in itself. Its usefulness or fruitlessness can neither add to, nor subtract from, this value. Its usefulness would be merely, as it were, the setting which enables us to handle it better in our ordinary dealings or to attract the attention of those not yet sufficiently expert, but not to commend it to experts or to determine its value.¹

THAT 'moral goodness' is a condition inherently unattainable by human beings is a theory that has been favoured, expressly or inadvertently, by many philosophers. And others have in effect put it out of the reach of any but exceptionally well-informed or exceptionally fortunate persons by connecting it with knowledge not easily or usually acquired or with accomplishments rarely achieved and still more rarely sustained. Other philosophers have frowned on this kind of view as an eccentricity. Vauvenargues detected that it was only by the subterfuge of inventing a 'virtu incompatible avec la nature de l'homme' that La Rochefoucauld was able to announce coldly that 'il n'y avait aucun vertu'. But the philosopher in modern times who is memorable for having propounded a moral theory in which 'moral goodness' is made entirely independent of any external achievement is, of course, Immanuel Kant.

My excuse for quoting at length what is perhaps the most famous single passage in the works of Kant is that I wish to examine in detail the force and implications of a distinction which he makes, perhaps more clearly here than anywhere else, between a person's good willing and what this may, or may not, enable him to attain. I agree with the opinion that in this passage Kant makes a distinction of the utmost importance to moral philosophy, and I am convinced that he comes nearer to stating its exact force than any other ethical

¹ Professor H. J. Paton's translation of the *Grundlegung*, page 62. See also Abbott's translation (12). In references to the *Grundlegung* I shall give first the page numbers of Paton's translation, then the small numbers in the text of Abbott's translation.

writer has done; but I think it can be shown that his argument contains serious inconsistencies, and that the importance both of the question and of the writer justify an examination in some detail of the issues involved.

I begin with a few remarks about what is said in the quoted passage. In saying that a good will is good, we are not referring to anything which it might, in a particular case, effect or fail to effect. Thus, in speaking of a will as good, we are making quite a different sort of point from the point we make when we describe anything else whatever other than a will as being good. Kant expresses this by saying that a will can be said to be 'good in itself', and by saying that it is strictly 'beyond comparison' with any object which it could attain. We can appraise favourably or unfavourably all sorts of accomplishments which a person might have, or fail to possess; but what we are doing when we say that these are good is different from what we are doing when we say that a will is good. Thus it follows that to confuse any favourable or unfavourable appraisal of anything which a person had attained or failed to attain, with the judgment that his will was good or not good, would be a serious mistake in ethics. I shall now examine Kant's argument in his various ethical writings, with a view to seeing how far he is himself able to avoid just this mistake.

We must try, first, to clarify this concept of a 'will estimable in itself'.¹ It appears that this is a will which acts 'from the motive of duty'. It is not quite clear, I think, exactly how this ought to be interpreted in reading Kant. There is a sense of 'motive' in which one can sensibly speak of lacking the ability to call up a particular motive at will, in which it is not nonsense to say that it might be beyond one's power to have certain motives, or to do actions from certain motives. In the sense in which love, affection, jealousy and the like are motives, we cannot summon up motives at will. But 'duty', in Kant's sense, is not a motive in the way in which these are: it is not a feeling, or a disposition to have certain feelings. To do an action, or to try to do an action, 'from the motive of duty', is much more like doing it because we believe we are morally obliged. 'What is essential in the moral worth of action is *that the moral law should directly determine the will*. If the determination of the will takes place in conformity indeed to the moral law, but only by means of a feeling, no matter of what kind, which has to be presupposed in order that the law may be sufficient to determine the will, and therefore not *for the sake of the law*, then the action will possess *legality* but not *morality*.'² The use which Kant makes of 'motive' in speaking of acting from the motive of duty may be eccentric, but as long as he

¹ *Grundlegung*, p. 64; (16).

² *Critique of Practical Reason*, in Abbott, p. 195. Kant's italics.

adheres consistently to it, he is not departing from his original distinction between a person's good willing and anything which he may or may not be able to attain.

But when we turn to consider the imperatives which determine Kant's good will, an inconsistency appears. A will, whether perfectly good or not, is said to stand under 'objective laws'.¹ What is the force of 'objective' here? We are told at various points about actions being *recognized* to be objectively necessary, and Kant says that a categorical imperative would be one which represented an action as objectively necessary in itself. It seems clear that we may recognize certain actions to be objectively necessary, in the sense of binding on us, and do them for this reason, and it may turn out that in fact we were honestly mistaken.

Now if he is to be consistent, Kant would have to say that even if by some special disfavour of destiny we lack information needed in order to form a correct estimate of what actions we ought to do, when and to what extent, nevertheless this cannot affect the goodness of our will. He is certainly entitled to say that to act in accordance with the categorical imperative is to do an action which we conceive to be objectively necessary, but in his treatment of imperatives he often seems to want to say that obeying a categorical imperative entails doing an action which a perfectly adequately informed observer would judge to be objectively necessary. Obeying categorical imperatives in this sense, however, cannot, on Kant's own showing, be a necessary condition of having a good will. For, knowledge of what has been called the objectively right action in a situation is something which we may or may not be able to attain.

Kant, it is true, sometimes says that a perfectly moral being would not act under the constraint of duty, that for such a being there would be no imperative.² This seems to amount to saying that if we were morally perfect we should choose an action simply because we believed it to be good; we should not feel self-constrained by a consciousness of duty or obligation. Yet curiously enough, he offers an account of morality almost wholly in terms of notions like duty, obligation, imperatives and so on, which he has said are relevant only in speaking about those who are imperfectly moral. His justification is usually that he is writing about human conditions, but there is something here which needs looking at closely. It is not clear at first sight just exactly what sort of bearing the varying conditions in which a moral agent can find himself can be said to have upon the goodness of his willing, or the language in which it is appropriate to describe what would count as perfectly good willing in him. Does Kant want to say that, because of human conditions, human beings

¹ *Grundlegung*, pp. 80 and 81 *passim*; (37 and 38).

² *Ibid.*, p. 81; (38).

are, for some reason, always of imperfectly good will? What exactly can this mean? And how has this piece of knowledge been acquired?

We are sometimes told that human beings have to 'overcome obstacles': they have 'bad inclinations'.¹ The impulses of nature, it is said, hinder man in the fulfilment of his duty.² To have a good will, on this view, is to follow the dictates of right reason despite the promptings, and in the face of the obstacles, put up by something called our 'sensible nature'.³ The statements in terms of which this view has usually been expressed, both by Kant and by others who have held it, have been partly empirical generalizations about human psychology which it is not to the point to discuss here. Supposing these generalizations to be true, it remains to be seen whether they can possibly have any relevance to statements about good or bad willing, in Kant's sense. If it is the case that our nature contains bad inclinations, then these, together with any other disabilities under which it has been our destiny to suffer, would certainly impede our will in carrying out its intentions, and limit its attainments in any number of ways. Even if someone's will were perfectly good, such disabilities would bring it about that his attainment would less than perfectly reflect the moral perfection of his choices, and if they were severe enough might prevent his being able to accomplish anything. Yet Kant cannot, on this ground, deny perfection to his will. Nor is it clear how the fact that a moral agent is hindered by natural causes from carrying out his intentions, can make it appropriate to distinguish between his willing, and the willing of some hypothetical agent not so hindered, by using expressions like 'subjection to duty', or 'action under a categorical imperative', in giving an account of the moral choices of the former.

The notion is still current in some circles that morality consists in something called the struggle against temptation. At times Kant's treatment is simply a refined version of this way of thinking. What are we talking about when we use such expressions as 'moral struggle', 'struggle against temptation', 'overcoming bad inclinations' or 'controlling oneself'? I want to say that if Kant were consistent he would have had to be using words like 'struggle' in a rather special way. I would say that he could only consistently use an expression like 'giving way to inclinations' in order to speak of a will's being imperfectly good, if speaking of giving way to inclina-

¹ Kant usually speaks simply of 'inclination', but since inclination itself is already a kind of willing, it would be clearer, as is sometimes pointed out, to talk of rational and non-rational inclinations.

² *Preface to the Metaphysical Elements of Ethics*, Abbott, p. (223).

³ On this point, Kant and Aquinas were of one mind (cf. M. Gilson, *Le Thomisme*, ed. 1947, p. 363), and indeed I think this would be the view still adopted by many Christian theologians.

tions was merely a synonym for saying that the will was imperfectly good, and not a way of referring to any of the ways in which the will might be hindered in the attainment of its objects by any weaknesses in the person's nature. In other words, he could only use such a phrase if it added nothing to what he has already said in speaking of the failure of a will to be good. We ordinarily use expressions like 'giving way to inclinations' in referring to the effects upon our attainment of various objects, of weaknesses and propensities of various kinds in our nature, which are beyond our control. We would ordinarily describe a person as having given way to temptation even if his failure to achieve some object was due to deficiencies in his character which were beyond the control of his will. But if Kant were consistent, he could never make this sort of use of the expressions in question in his account of imperfections of the will. Yet this is just what he does at various points in his account. All this can be seen most clearly in his treatment of freedom in the *Grundlegung*, and in his analysis of the 'radical evil in human nature' in the 'Philosophical Theory of Religion'.¹

Unfortunately Kant's treatment in both these places is highly technical, and involves the use of his distinction between phenomena and noumena. Clearly I cannot discuss here the grounds which led Kant to adopt this distinction, nor attempt to give any account of it, or say whether or not it is defensible. All I can do is to suggest reasons for believing that, even if it were valid, its use does not enable Kant to escape from inconsistency in his treatment of imperfectly good willing.

In his later work on the 'radical evil in human nature', Kant is so determined to show that our nature is inherently 'corrupt'² that it is hard not to conclude that his earlier stress on the hostility of 'inclination' to 'rational willing' was at least partly due to this bias. Certainly it is in this work that the clash becomes most marked between the two sides of man's nature. Here Kant labours most in his effort to connect our evil willing with something in our 'nature'.³ Yet even here he admits that 'the source of the bad cannot lie in any object that *determines* the elective will through inclination, or in any natural impulse, but only in a rule that the elective will makes for itself for the use of its freedom, that is, a maxim'.⁴ He even goes on to admit that the 'primary source' of the adoption by man of good or bad maxims — the source of moral and immoral choice — is to us 'inscrutable'. In other words, we cannot predicate immorality of the action of some natural force; to do this would be to turn im-

¹ As Abbott calls *Die Religion innerhalb der Grenzen der blossen Vernunft*.

² Abbott, p. 325. In referring to this work, I shall give Abbott's ordinary page number, and not the bracketed numbers in his text.

³ Ibid., p. 327.

⁴ Ibid., p. 328. Kant's italics.

morality into a natural phenomenon. After all this, to what precisely can Kant be referring when he says that man is 'naturally evil'?

He tells us that when he says that a man has this innate quality (of being naturally evil) he means only that it was not acquired in time:¹ that from birth a man has always been like this — not that birth had anything to do with it. This, however, does not help, since it is merely a reference to his view that freedom, because it appertains to man as he is 'in himself', is outside time, or mere phenomenal sequence. My question can be put again in a slightly adapted form: what precisely can he mean by speaking of a timeless moral choice as naturally evil? Granted that there is some meaning in the notion of a free will choosing evil, what justification can be offered for the assertion that this choice is universal, that for some reason it even must be universal, that not even one person has ever had a perfectly good will? Just because of the hindrances to which we are all subject, one would not want to claim that a will, no matter how good, could ever attain to perfect success in the achievement of any of its objects; but this is quite different from denying that it could ever be perfectly good, for being perfectly good, as these words are used by Kant of the will, does not entail accomplishing anything. We certainly feel that there is something odd about expressions like 'perfect virtue', 'completely moral', 'perfectly good will' and the like, because we tend to forget that they are not descriptions of accomplishments, like the phrase 'perfect character', where by 'character' we are referring to a whole personality, and not just to willing.

Kant's reply to our questions is that man's free choice is 'universally evil' because it is 'by whatever means, interwoven with humanity and, as it were, rooted in it; hence we call this a natural propensity to evil'.² This seems to me to involve an open contradiction of his own position. It might be the case that there are, interwoven with humanity, various natural propensities which universally impede the achievement of the objects of moral willing, but this tells us only about the niggardliness of nature, and gives us no information about the goodness or otherwise of a man's will, in Kant's sense.

In the next paragraph after that last quoted, Kant writes: 'that there must be such corrupt propensity rooted in man need not be formally proved in the face of the multitude of crying examples which experience sets before men's eyes *in the acts of men*'.³ These are 'enough to make him turn away his eyes from the conduct of men, lest he should fall into another vice, namely, misanthropy'.⁴ If Kant had looked more closely at what exactly we do witness when we observe our fellow men, he might have been less confident that

¹ Abbott, p. 331.

² Ibid., p. 339.

³ Ibid., p. 339.

⁴ Ibid., p. 341.

his assertions needed no formal proof. What we observe are the various things which people succeed, more or less, in accomplishing. We do not observe their willing — indeed, it would probably be more strictly correct to say that it does not make sense to speak of our observing their willing.

I may now state in a more general form my criticism of the way in which Kant uses his noumenon-phenomenon distinction in the analysis of morality. I shall not attempt to conceal my opinion that what is valuable in Kant's ethics not only does not depend on this distinction, but is confused and weakened by its use. If man were what Kant would call a purely 'intelligible' being, then whatever else might be true of him, he would, on Kant's view, have a perfectly good will. 'Man (even the worst) does not in any maxim, as it were, rebelliously abandon the moral law (and renounce obedience to it). On the contrary this forces itself upon him irresistibly by virtue of his moral nature, and if no other spring opposed it, he would also adopt it into his ultimate maxim as the adequate determining principle of his elective will, that is, he would be morally good. But by reason of his physical nature, which is likewise blameless, he also depends on sensible springs of action'.¹ But this is to explain our imperfectly good willing as due to our dependence on 'sensible springs of action', which is inconsistent with Kant's own position about the good will. And further, it is inconsistent with his many explicit admissions of the invalidity of such explanations, and his usual recognition that it does not make sense to ask to be told the source of good and bad willing.

What I have said applies equally to the treatment of the freedom of 'rational will' and the determinism of 'phenomenal nature' in the *Grundlegung*. Kant tells us that, as belonging to the sensible world, man is forced to consider himself determined, but as a rational being, and belonging also to something called the intelligible world, he cannot but think of himself as free.² Sometimes he seems to want to say that the life we lead here and now is simply a perfectly determined reflection, spread out in space and time, of a choice made by our rational wills outside time. Whatever in detail this sort of doctrine might mean, it clearly entails taking the view that what he has hitherto described as the failure of the good will to achieve its objects owing to the niggardliness of nature, is not really to be construed at all as an interference with what the will can attain, but as reflecting what in some sense we have really chosen from the beginning. But whatever may be said about this sort of view, it is clearly inconsistent with the other contention which Kant has been making, and to which I have objected above, namely, that the imperfect goodness of our wills can

¹ Ibid., p. 343.

² *Grundlegung*, p. 121; (87).

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be attributed to the operation of something in our sensible nature.¹

It may be worth remarking that the view which Kant slips into at times, that the will in so far as it is free is always perfectly good, has a very long history. It appears to have been held by Socrates, and Professor Paton draws attention to the extent to which Kant seems to have been influenced by the *Phaedo*.² It turns up again in as different a philosopher as St Thomas Aquinas. If we were completely free from natural limitations and hindrances of all sorts, we could not deliberately choose evil. "Nullus intendens ad malum operatur", dira toujours saint Thomas avec le pseudo-Denys. Vouloir le mal, ce serait, au vrai, ne pas vouloir.³ It is very hard indeed to imagine a state of affairs such as these writers envisage, or to say how we would will if we found ourselves in such a condition. There are, however, a few things which can be said. If these views were correct, it would follow, for instance, that one could not give any sense to speaking of one will being better than another; or indeed to expressions of blame of the sort which imply that someone's failure to achieve an object was to some extent due to a failure in his willing. Kant's views about the good will in the quotation with which this paper began, are consistent with its being the case that in fact everyone's will has always been perfectly good. If this were in fact the case, however, it would not be consistent with Kant's view of the good will in that passage to describe this supposed state of affairs by saying that the weaknesses of our sensible nature make us naturally evil, using expressions whose usual force implies that a culpable failing of will can be imputed to somebody. To say that all wills are perfect is like saying that all jewels are equally valuable; connoisseurs could then dispute only as to the relative success of the different settings. If it happens that all jewels are equally valuable, and hence that talk about them is only a comparison of their settings, it is grossly misleading to go on using expressions which were first employed under the impression that the jewels differed in merit, which were designed to express this sort of point, and which must necessarily therefore suggest to a hearer that a comparison of merit between the jewels, and not merely between their settings, is at issue.

When he began to set out the fundamental principles of the meta-

¹ Typical passages in which Kant treats 'sensibility' as 'an obstacle to practical reason' are in the *Critique of Practical Reason*, Abbott, p. 201; p. 205; pp. 208-17.

² H. J. Paton, *The Categorical Imperative*, chap. I, p. 6, note; also chap. II, p. 65, note.

³ P. Sertillanges, *La Philosophie de S. Thomas d'Aquin*, ed. 1940, vol. II, p. 187. Again, P. Sertillanges writes, 'La liberté du mal n'existe pas dans l'esprit pur. Si l'homme la possède, c'est qu'il est lié à la matière...' op. cit., vol. I, p. 228. M. Gilson, also, writes: 'Si donc l'homme était un pur esprit... il nous suffirait de voir ce qu'il faut faire pour le faire, la thèse de Socrate serait vraie...' *Le Thomisme*, ed. 1947, p. 364.

physic of morals, Kant was obviously quite clear that wills differ in merit, and not merely in their attainment of their objects, and he departs from this view only when he imagines himself required to explain and justify odd conceptions like that of the natural evil in human nature. When he is consistent with his original position, I feel that he would agree with Augustine in saying: 'Seek the cause of this evil will, and you shall find just none. For what can cause the will's evil, the will being sole cause of all evil? The evil will, therefore, causes evil works, but nothing causes the evil will . . . For the will turning from the superior to the inferior, becomes bad, not because the thing whereunto it turns is bad but because the turning is bad and perverse. No inferior thing then depraves the will, but the will depraves itself.'¹

¹ Augustine, *De Civitate Dei*, Bk. XII, chap. vi. Augustine's manner of developing his position is of course not free from difficulties, and he falls into confusions reminiscent of those which we have found in Kant.

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O. G. S. CRAWFORD: *Archaeology in the Field*. Phoenix House, 42s. net.

It was in his Editorial Notes to the first number of *Antiquity* (March 1927) that Crawford set down the main ideas that lie behind the present work. More than anyone else at that time he realized the great possibilities that lay at hand of synthesizing and interpreting the disordered mass of archaeological material which was pouring in from all parts. He aimed at presenting it to the public as an organic whole—the history of Man, and at the same time he set out to educate his public to think archaeologically. 'Our field is the earth, our range of time a million or so years, our subject the human race.' So *Antiquity* began, and so it has remained.

Moreover, Crawford believed that social anthropology would prove to be the main ally of the archaeologist. It would provide him with the clue to understanding a mass of otherwise baffling problems such as the evolution of hill-top settlements or the use made of the different types of prehistoric earthwork. He was insistent that the answer to his questions would come from knowledge 'derived at first hand from things and not merely compiled from books'.

To a great extent he was right, and all these ideas are abundantly illustrated in the present work. The author has written something much more important than an agreeable guide to anyone who is interested in archaeology and enjoys rambling over the countryside, especially the Wessex countryside. It is all this too. The descriptions of how the field archaeologist sets to work, the superb air-photographs and informative plans, the chapters on Celtic fields, ponds, camps, dene-holes, and linear earthworks are fascinating reading, and will inspire anyone who loves the countryside. But Crawford is always on the look-out for the 'present-tense' of archaeology, for similar types of culture that can be observed at the first hand among the more backward peoples of the world today. He is ready to take the reader to modern hill-forts south of Lake Chad or to cave dwellings in southern Tunisia to aid in the understanding of British pre-history. The chapters on 'Archaeology and Anthropology' and 'Living Pre-history in Central Africa' are among the most valuable and stimulating in the whole book. The author has rendered a quite exceptional service to scholarship, because as time goes on, as modern technical invention and ways of thought penetrate further, living primitive cultures will no longer exist. Studying a survival which has lost its original meaning is very different from the culture itself. Thanks largely to the author, the alliance between archaeologist and anthropologist came into being when it was most needed.

One example of the author's method may be given. Those who are interested in the decline of the cities in the later Roman Empire and in the social units which replaced them should have a look at a photograph of a 'Squatter's shack amid the departed glories of Suakim' (facing p. 224). Suakim on the Red Sea coast, as Crawford points out (p. 231), was once a flourishing port serving the Nile valley and the Fung kingdom of Sennar. It continued to thrive down to the first years of the present century when Port Sudan came into operation. It is now practically deserted. Thus in the background of the photograph we see a substantial eighteenth-nineteenth century palace, neglected, its shuttered windows broken, its masonry decaying. Nearer the eye is a squatter's hut built out of fallen stonework, and wood from the broken balconies, inhabited by a family of detribalized nomads. Crawford suggests that the picture shows the sort of conditions that must have obtained in Britain after the withdrawal of Roman power. Precisely, and not only in Britain. In many of the North African cities, such as Timgad and Thuburbo Mauns, the forum and other open spaces

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were used in the sixth and seventh centuries by farmers and petty nomads. The traces of their oil presses and gourd-bis are easily identifiable among the ruins of the temples and public buildings. The reviewer has seen much the same development among some of the decaying French settlements in the Kabylie.

The danger at present is that the alliance between archaeologist and anthropologist is becoming so firm that the study of a third factor in the story of Man, his literary work, will be neglected. To proclaim the 'independence of archaeology from the servile status as the handmaid of books' (p. 36) is a proud but futile boast. It is also an exaggeration to say that 'by progressive refinement of technique we can now select a completely undocumented site and construct its history' (p. 29), except in bare outline, unless one is lucky enough to hit on literary evidence or inscriptions in the course of the dig. An incense cup, a distinctive potsherd, the rubbish trodden into a hut floor, the odd weapon or tool will tell us much about how the inhabitants lived their daily lives and of their contacts with their neighbours, but their minds remain a closed book to us. As the author points out (p. 140), 'In studying the armour we must not forget the man inside it.' Without literary evidence archaeology must remain an incomplete study, and not all the pollen analysis and radio-carbon dating will alter the fact.

The author was right in attacking dilettanti and collectors and on insisting that archaeology was itself a field of knowledge. But the student of Man needs texts as well as distribution maps. To understand, for instance, the history of the early Church in the Mediterranean world, he wants to know what Arius and Athanasius were saying, as well as the shape of their coffins and the type of querns and pots their relatives were using in the villages near Alexandria. To encourage the study of objects to the neglect of literature is to encourage just that mental lop-sidedness which the author has so vigorously denounced.

The work is not free from avoidable faults. It is inclined to ramble, there is a certain tilting at windmills and there are too many long-winded footnotes. We would like to have seen the final chapters on archaeology and anthropology expanded to include many more of the fascinating references to primitive cultures today that at present lie scattered about the book. One hopes there will be a revised edition. But these are faults of detail. It remains a work of a great man and a great humanist. The world, not only of scholarship, stands in his debt.

W. H. C. FRENCH

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